THE HUNTING TOURS OF SURTEES

CREATOR OF JORROCKS



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THE HUNTING TOURS

OF

SURTEES

(CREATOR OF JORROCKS)



ARRIVAL OF KING CHARLES X. AT THE MEET.

THE HUNTING TOURS

OF

SURTEES

(CREATOR OF JORROCKS)

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION BY

E. D. CUMING

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INTRODUCTION.

THESE selections from Surtees' Hunting Tours possess an interest wider than that pertaining to the maiden efforts of a famous writer on sport: they afford a singularly graphic picture of country life and travel in England a century or more ago, limned by a shrewd observer of men and things.

It may be well to recall the circumstances under which the creator of Jorrocks embarked upon these tours which cover three seasons—1829 to 1832: he was, as he has told us, always fond of scribbling, and in the dead winter of 1829 amused himself by writing a "semi-sporting novel" which when two-thirds completed he put in the fire, discouraged by the contumely of friends to whom he showed the manuscript. He had, however, kept a Hunting Journal, and from this he sketched out some papers which he offered to the 'Old Sporting Magazine.' His offerings came at the right moment, Nimrod then being at variance with the proprietors, and the bait was promptly taken by the editor; so cordial the acceptance accorded these first efforts that presently Surtees found himself installed "as first fiddle in the hunting line." A friend of his (who appears to have been Mr Sitwell)

having adopted the signature of "Nim North," Surtees assumed that of "Nim South"; and over this pen-name contributed most of his letters on hunting.

Having succeeded Nimrod on the 'Sporting Magazine' staff, he embarked upon a series of visits to various hunts in the Home counties, and rendered account of the sport he enjoyed under the title "Nim South's Southern Tour," his contributions granted the dignity of capitals in the Contents List of the monthly numbers from June 1830 to January 1831. These are embodied in the first twelve chapters. Then his connection with what he calls "the old Warwick coach" (the 'Sporting Magazine' was published in Warwick Square) came to an end.

In February of 1831 he approached the executors of Mr Pittman with a proposal to buy a share in the magazine; and this offer declined, he set to work and established, in partnership with Mr Rudolf Ackermann, his own venture, the 'New Sporting Magazine'; in this, the first number of which appeared in May 1831, he continued to record his experiences with various packs, at first with regularity, afterwards with less frequency.

His letters attracted notice from the first, evoking from readers communications with which he deals: thus, in Chapter XI. he finds himself under the necessity of making clear his views on the subject of hunting bagmen—a practice then more common than is generally supposed,—on the preservation of foxes, on the propriety of advertising meets, and other matters interesting to hunting men. Though he did not, when challenged, deny his authorship of Nim South's letters, he never courted recognition; on the

contrary, he makes an occasional jocular attempt to prevent those who had seen a stranger in the field from identifying that stranger with "Nim South"; for example, at the end of Chapter VI. he asserts that he is "rather corpulent," the truth being that his tall frame was always spare. Elsewhere he appends to a grotesque misdescription of the person of "Nim South" (probably written by himself) the assuring note, "You have him to a T!"

He may have done well to try and preserve anonymity, for he was the most fearless and outspoken of critics; witness his condemnation of the manner in which the Surrey Union hounds drew gorse coverts. But if never hesitating to chastise, he is always ready with praise where deserved. On occasion he is somewhat personal in his comments, as when he remarks upon the size of Mr Hobson's "bay window," and the unconventional dress of some who followed hounds. His strictures on the latter subject are what we might expect of one so scrupulous concerning his own attire under all circumstances; and he had, like Nimrod, decided opinion on the precision with which a man should turn out to meet hounds. A feature of his novels is the particularity with which he describes the dress of characters.

In Chapter X. he betrays the then commonly held objection to the appearance of ladies in the field with fox-hounds. He saw none to their following the harriers, but with fox-hounds ladies were out of place. Opinion had changed on this point thirty-five years later when he wrote 'Facey Romford'; he makes it no reproach to that gentleman when he employs Lucy Glitters as his whipper-in; though, to be sure, Miss Glitters cannot be

regarded as typical of the hunting woman of her day!

It will be remarked that he soon realised the unwisdom of attempting to describe runs in detail; he learned that it is one thing to see a good run and quite another to reproduce it on paper; and thus contents himself with remarking upon incident and those features of any gallop with hounds that stayed in mind as noteworthy.

Surtees made these tours when the country was in the throes of agitation which, in parts of the country at least, came near rebellion; agitation attributed by the political historian to the demand for extended franchise, but which may perhaps be more accurately described as the "growing pains" of the Industrial Age; witness the innumerable attempts to destroy machinery of any and every description. Thus it is that the doings of "Captain Swing" figure in Surtees' tale, as well they might when the southern and midland counties of England were in the grip of misguided men whose sole aim would seem to have been destruction by sheer violence or incendiarism. The leading spirits of the rioters would appear in some cases to have been insane; an example occurs in that conscientious iron-founder so convinced of the iniquity of employing machinery that he led the way in wrecking his own shops!

His surroundings have unfailing interest for Surtees; the beauty of the land, whether it be the natural loveliness of the New Forest or the splendours of Belvoir, has its appeal; and, unlike other scribes on sport intent, his imagination is stirred by the historical ruin that comes under his eye. His interests indeed were catholic: he finds entertainment in the humours of a country

fair, in that venerable institution the Stamford "Bull-running," in his day well embarked on the seventh century of its existence.

Journeying from place to place by coach or in the saddle, he had abundant opportunity to realise the difficulties and disagreeables of winter travel; his narratives abound in those little touches that vitalise, and I recall no writer who gives so vivid a picture of the Road; the nasty noise of the wheels that bespeaks increasing frost and so forbids hope of hunting; the discomfort of the box-seat when deprived of the coachman's apron; the attitude of innkeepers towards the outside passenger; the obstruction of the mail on some narrow highway by an obstinate waggoner; the scenes at the coach-office.

So also as regards the inns with which his tours made him familiar all over the country. His candid accounts of these would be as useful to his contemporaries as they are entertaining to us. In this connection, his meeting with the commercial traveller at Swindon occurs to mind as characteristic of the man: he adopted at once the part attributed to him by the stranger, and lent sympathetic ear to his gloomy account of the paint and colour trade. We cannot imagine his great predecessor allowing himself for a moment to be mistaken for a commercial traveller. Surtees was amused; Nimrod would have been shocked past expression.

Of necessity Surtees came in contact with some of the great sportsmen of his time; and he writes with enthusiasm of Mr Assheton Smith, Mr Tom Smith, Squire Osbaldeston, and others with whom he hunted. He falls, by the way, into a trifling error when in his appreciation of the Squire's accom-

plishments he calls him a fisherman. Osbaldeston himself has told us that he was "no piscator."

One Master of Fox-hounds, of whom he writes in particularly cordial terms, has received scant attention from other chroniclers. Colonel Hylton Jolliffe (born 1773, died 1843) was a typical example of the sportsman of that period: he came of a sporting family—the epitaph on the tomb in Worcestershire of one of his ancestors, with more regard for truth than for the graver conventions, states that the deceased gentleman was *venator indefessus;* and the same description applies to Colonel Jolliffe, also an "indefatigable sportsman": he was caricatured by Dighton as "The Hero of the Chase." Retiring in 1804 from the Coldstream Guards, a battalion of which he commanded at the Battle of Alexandria, he settled down on the family property to which he had before then succeeded, and began to assemble his kennel at Merstham. The exact date of the establishment of his hunt is unknown, but family records prove that he was hunting his hounds that year (1804); and he continued to do so until after the season 1830-31, when he resigned office, and his country was taken over by the neighbouring packs. Surtees refers to the colonel's candidature for the county of Surrey in terms which suggest that Parliamentary honours would be new to the M.F.H. He seems to have been unaware that Colonel Jolliffe had had long experience at Westminster. He was nominated in the Tory interest for the county at the General Election of 1830; but as the poll progressed—open for several days according to the usage of the time—he recognised that his chance of success was slender, and "declined" the contest, withdrawing his candidature. He had previously

represented the borough of Petersfield from 1796 to 1797, sat from 1802 to 1830, and was again returned for that borough in 1831, retaining his seat until 1835, thus enjoying the suffrages of Petersfield for nearly forty-three years.

Surtees' reference to the colonel's hat deserves a little amplification: the Master always wore a low-crowned hat with a very wide curly brim. Lord Hylton is not sure whether this head-gear was his own design, but it seems to have been unique, as it earned for the wearer the sobriquet of "The Hat," alternatively "Hat Jolliffe."

Of Roffey, the huntsman, it may be said that he retired when the colonel retired, and established himself in a public-house near Merstham.

A very interesting passage in Surtees' account of his hunting is that in which he describes meeting the Duke of Wellington while awaiting the arrival of Sir John Cope's hounds. Veneration for the great soldier does nothing to curb his pen: we have the frankest possible criticism of His Grace's horsemanship; Surtees had seldom seen a man with less idea of riding; few took more falls during a season than the Duke, whose seat was "unsightly in the extreme." The chronicler remembers, however, that the croppers of such a personage are noticed when those of lesser men pass unobserved. Whatever his shortcomings as a horseman, the Duke was a pillar of strength to fox-hunting. Æsop ('Sporting Reminiscences of Hampshire') says he was a great supporter of the Vine, at one time subscribing £400 a year to the funds, though he had not many coverts within the territory of that hunt. More: when it came to his knowledge that Sir John Cope had drawn Strathfieldsaye coverts blank, the Duke notified his keepers that if such a thing happened

again all of them should be discharged. His Grace intended that his orders to preserve foxes should be obeyed.

When not out with hounds, Surtees' haunts were frequently the nearest hunt kennels; his observations on hounds seen on the flags show his interest; and if some of his remarks have been curtailed, it is only because they apply to individual animals whose fame in lifetime has not survived them. These serve also to show how the writer acquired the knowledge he turned to such good account in the works of fiction to which he devoted himself at a later stage.

A devoted horse-lover, he has ever an eye for the nags he sees out with hounds and in the stable. They are as interesting to him as are the hounds.

Mr Jorrocks crops up once or twice in these pages. The birth of the great man coincided practically with that of the 'New Sporting Magazine,' and while Surtees was writing his Tours, he was at the same time tracing the adventures and thoughts of Mr Jorrocks, whose humour is so frequently apparent in the early writings of his creator. With the humour we find all the freshness of the new-fledged pen and the high spirits of youth, with but little of the satire which characterises later work by the same hand. Surtees on hunting intent looked out upon his world with an indulgent eye.

It would be difficult, if indeed possible, to trace the boundaries of the various countries visited by Surtees in their relation to those of our day, but they may be roughly outlined. The East Sussex in his time included the Southdown country, separation of the two having taken place in 1843. Colonel Wyndham's, or the West Sussex, is now, broadly speaking, Lord Leconfield's. Mr Oxen-

don's is the East Kent. The Old Berkeley, whose members were so lacking in cordiality to strangers, hunted until 1862 the O.B.H. (East) and O.B.H. (West), which latter is no longer visited by hounds. Colonel Jolliffe, from about 1804 to 1831, hunted "that part of Surrey between the countries belonging to the Union and the Surrey Fox-hounds" ('New Sporting Magazine,' Vol. I., p. 63). Elsewhere Surtees remarks that he "never knew exactly how the county was divided between the three hunts, but I believe Box Hill, about due south of Epsom, was the Colonel's extreme cover on the Union side, and the Godstone Road formed the boundary between the Surrey country and his on the other." The "N.S.U.," or New Surrey Union country, remains much as it was when the hunt was established in 1799; the "New" has long been dropped. The Craven country also has undergone little change since Mr Tom Smith won Surtees' admiration in the field. Mr Assheton Smith's country, it need hardly be said, was the Tidworth. Sir John Cope hunted what are now the Garth and Old Berkshire countries. The original Old Berkshire country was of enormous extent; Mr Moreton, to whose success in building up his pack Surtees bears admiring witness, formed the V.W.H. out of a portion of the Old Berkshire when it was divided. Mr Harvey Combe took the Old Berkeley in 1820, and, Mr Robert Webber informs me, hunted the Berkshire and South Oxfordshire country until 1826, when he gave up the former territory and confined himself to the South Oxfordshire portion, which he hunted until his retirement in favour of Captain Freeman. He resumed office, however, in the following season.

Of the other countries visited by Surtees, it

may be noticed that the Hambledon remains much as it was a century ago. The H.H. of that period hunted also what is now the Hursley country, Mr Villebois keeping a second pack at Hursley for the purpose. Mr Codrington hunted the southern part of Wiltshire. Earl Fitzwilliam had country in Northants and Huntingdon. Mr Ralph Lambton, who with Mr Henry Lambton established the Raby Hunt in 1793, hunted the county Durham for fifty-five years. There has been little change in the Bicester, now Bicester and Warden Hill, country since the days of Mr Drake. As far as history tells us, he hunted all the country now belonging to the modern Hunt. Major G. H. Jolliffe, Hon. Secretary of the Bicester and Warden Hill, believes that at some time the Grafton hunted part of the country. The Puckeridge territory is another which has undergone little change since Surtees' day.

When writing the autobiography which he did not live to finish, Surtees drew upon his early experiences at Brighton during the season 1829-30 ('R. S. Surtees, Creator of Jorrocks'). A few passages relating to the sport there enjoyed and the persons encountered have, therefore, been omitted from the 'Southern Tour,' it appearing unnecessary to repeat them.

A few of the engravings here reproduced from the old and new Sporting Magazines were made to illustrate the contributions of "Nim South"; the majority were designed to accompany any hunting article.

I acknowledge gratefully the assistance I have received at Sir Robert Witt's invaluable Art Reference Library, 32 Portman Square.

E. D. CUMING.

LONDON, 1927.

THE HUNTING TOURS OF SURTEES.

THE SOUTHERN TOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE EAST SUSSEX.

(Season 1829-1830.)

EMBARRASSING SITUATION AT REIGATE—RECOVERY OF HUNTING GEAR—COACH JOURNEY THROUGH SNOW—BRIGHTON GAIETIES—VARIETY OF HUNTING IN SUSSEX—SCRIBES AND HUNTS—THE EAST SUSSEX HOUNDS—MEET AT RINGMER GREEN—THE PACK COMMENDED—ARRIVAL OF THE MASTER—STAMP OF HUNTER IN THE FIELD—DRESS OF MEMBERS—THE FOX AWAY—STIFF FENCING—A FORMIDABLE BROOK—SOURCE OF INCOME TO COTTAGER—THE FOX LOST AT GLYNDE.

THE season (1829-30) which has just drawn to a close has been one of the most unpropitious that I remember to sportsmen in general, and myself in particular. As a body we were laid up in ordinary for several weeks during the very heart of it; and individually, I was prevented making a sporting tour into the Midlands and Northern counties, for which I was prepared.

I was baffled in almost my first attempt to meet hounds. Anxious to see a friend at Brighton, and thinking to have a day with Colonel Jolliffe *en passant*, I sent a horse to Reigate on the 24th November for the following day, when the fixture, I think, was Outwood, or some place a few miles to the south-west, and rode down myself the same evening, forwarding my hunting clothes, &c., by coach.

The weather, which at first promised favourably, towards night became so boisterous that I was almost blown away, horse and all, from the top of Reigate Hill. About nine o'clock, however, when I went into the stable to see my horses done up for the night, the wind had somewhat abated, and it rained a little; so giving orders for the morning, and finding my own company rather dull, I shortly after retired to my bedroom, when I made the pleasing discovery that the coach had taken my things on to Brighton, leaving me with nothing but what I wore. The waiter consoled me by saying he had no doubt they would be returned by the mail; so hoping he might prove a true prophet, I borrowed a white cotton night-cap of mine host of the White Hart and crept into bed.

Punctual to the hour, the chambermaid made her appearance with hot water, but no portmanteau had arrived; and after kicking about in bed in a tremendous fume for some half-hour or so, I made up my mind to hunt in my trousers, and increase the weight of obligations to mine host by borrowing a pair of spurs. Just as I was going to put my resolve into execution, in walked a porter from the opposite inn (the White something else), with the identical portmanteau on his shoulder. You may suppose with what alacrity

I sprang out of bed and pounced upon the red rag and white cords. But oh, how transient is human happiness! I drew up the window blind, and found the world under snow at least a foot and a half deep!

This was the severest cut of all. If they had had the gumption to mention it when awaking me, I should not have minded much whether the portmanteau made its appearance or not; but tantalising me by bringing it, and then letting me shiver out of my snug bed to make the discovery myself, was rather a refinement of cruelty.

To continue my journey on horseback seeming neither very desirable nor safe, from the balling of the snow in the horse's feet, I got into the first coach that passed, which after braving all dangers landed its cargo safely at Brighton. Though the snow was pretty deep it did not lie long; in the neighbourhood of Brighton, at least, it was all gone before many days had elapsed.

Brighton is a very easy place to go to, but a very difficult one to leave; and the longer a person stays, the less likely he is to quit, until the commencement of the London season summons him to Town.

My intended week grew into a month; then came a frost, and in such case I consider a man is better at Brighton than anywhere else, for in no place in England, out of London, is better society to be found, or society which is more accessible to a man with either introduction or address; and the winter glides away amidst a constant succession of dinners and balls, while, wind and weather permitting, there is abundance of hunting, shooting, racing, and boating; also, for those that like it, fishing, though, I think, the visitor regards this latter amusement

somewhat in the light that Luke Freeman, formerly huntsman to Lord Egremont, regarded music: some one asking him what he thought of it, "Aye, fiddling," said he, "it's varry well for cripples and suchlike poor things; I always gives them a halfpenny when I sees them at fairs."

I do not know any country that presents greater variety in the hunting way than Sussex. The tremulous rider (not writer) may follow hounds where he need never jump anything in the shape of a fence, or a ditch that would hold himself; while for the bolder sportsman there is country where he may try his own and his horse's courage at a six-foot hedge with a blind ditch on either side, a rasping hang-gate (as they call them) with two bars on the top, or a wide brook with a so-so foundation and bad landing.

Taking the several packs of hounds in the neighbourhood in order of precedence—fox-hounds before harriers, and so forth,—the East Sussex perhaps claim first notice, inasmuch as they are a subscription pack, "open to all and influenced by one"; and as they advertise their meets, there is never any disappointment. In point of superiority, however, they must yield the palm to Colonel Wyndham's, of which I shall speak hereafter.

I have observed in the accounts we read that the different hunting establishments are generally depicted *couleur de rose*, as the French say. The writers, if resident in the country, perhaps hunt with no other hounds save those whose performances they record, and, of course, feel that natural prepossession which all men do, or ought to do, for their own; and local circumstances frequently bias their judgment, and restrain free

vent of their thoughts; while fear of offending, of being thought ungrateful for civilities, sometimes induces the tourist to gloss over imperfections, and place the few he does admit to the score of the "country"—that willing hack. Hence, whether we read of a run with the Dorset Blackmore Vale Hounds, or the Conock Harriers, the writers extol the condition of the hounds and horses; the steadiness of the former in covert; the manner in which they carry a head over ploughed land; and the civility and cuteness of the servants; with a handsome and oftentimes just eulogium on the Proprietor, Master, Manager, Director, Governor, General, or *quocunque nomine gaudet* of the gentleman at the head of the establishment, who is always admitted to be a thorough-paced sportsman, generally uniting with that character the urbanity and polish of the finished gentleman.

And lucky it is that such a policy exists; else how, I should like to know, can we expect other people to have a good opinion of us or our hounds if we have not a good opinion ourselves? And what society is more agreeable than that where all parties are predetermined to be pleased?

And now, before I proceed with my remarks, I beg to disclaim all ungenerous feelings. If I am less lavish in my praise, or more free in my comments, than former writers, my feeble pen will detract neither from the justice of their liberal encomiums nor from the merit of their observations. Criticisms are mere matters of opinion founded upon individual taste; and so, as the Frenchman said when he kissed his pig, "*Chacun à son goût.*"

To begin, then, with the East Sussex Hounds, now under the management of Mr Charles Craven,

who succeeded Major Carter, I believe, some two or three seasons back; to the former of whom every person gives great praise for the improvement which has taken place since they came under his direction—not that I mean thereby to imply any shortcoming to the former Master, whoever he was, for I do not know how he was situated. Not having hunted with them before, I shall confine myself to the figure they cut when under my own observation.

The first time I met them was at the Kennel at Ringmer Green, shortly after the snowstorm I mentioned. I had sent a horse on to the Black Horse Inn (or Falkiner Arms, as Mr Kemp facetiously calls it, from the patronage on hunting days of the worthy baronet of that name), at the entrance to Lewes from Brighton, where by the way there is an excellent breakfast set out every morning. the hounds meet near Lewes; as also luncheon, the chief delicacy consisting of sausages, which, as every person allowed to be excellent, I did not spoil my dinner by eating.

The hour of meeting was a quarter before eleven; and having changed my horse I rode on in order to have a look at the hounds before they went into covert, in case I might not see them afterwards. On the Green, on the left-hand side of the road which runs through the picturesque village of Ringmer, sat George Hennessey, formerly a whipper-in to Colonel Jolliffe, afterwards to the Puckeridge, since to the Union, late a post-boy, and now huntsman to the E.S.F., with some twenty couple of hounds (ladies and gentlemen) attended by two whippers-in.

Though they had only come from the kennel (a few hundred yards), the men's boots looked as if they had performed a day's journey, at least

so much of the boots as were visible for immense corduroy overalls, which hung like sacks from above the knee nearly to the ankle. In other respects they differed little from the generality of the brotherhood.

George, though rather corpulent, sits well on horseback, but the Nimrod of the establishment is Press, the first whip, a lightweight and a bold forward rider.

It seems to have been the fashion in Brighton (I do not know for how long) to run down these hounds; and my expectations not having been raised very high, I was agreeably surprised to find a very fair average pack, with every appearance of health and strength, though perhaps without any one particularly elegant hound in the whole lot.

By the time I had made my observations and George's acquaintance, scarlets came pouring in from Battle, Brighton, Lewes, Uckfield, and elsewhere.

"Isn't Mr Craven coming to-day, George?" inquired an elderly gentleman (evidently one of the seniors of the Hunt), looking at his chronometer.

"Oh yeas, sir," said George, "I think this maun be he coming down the road now."

But naught was visible save a wretched one-horse close carriage, which in Town is denominated a Pill-box, in Paris a Demi-fortune, and in Brighton a Fly—*lucus a non lucendo*, I suppose.

Be its name what it may, it drove up and out stepped six feet of man, dressed in a shabby scarlet coat, worsted comforter, *dunducketty* mud-coloured smalls, with cloth caps to a pair of tremendous clumsy-looking Wellington boots.

This was Mr Craven. Like Master like man,

thought I; not that I consider men one bit the worse sportsmen for being careless in their appointments, but it is as well for a Master of Hounds to study neatness, if only as an example to the servants; besides, I happen to know, as Paul Pry says, that Mr Craven does possess some top-boots, for he sported a very nice pair this morning when he went to breakfast at the Earl of Chichester's, prior to the hounds throwing off at Stanmore Park.

Having stretched his legs after the cramping fly, he mounted his horse, and the hounds moved on to the Plashets, an enormous covert some three miles north-east of Ringmer. Being a perfect stranger, I had plenty of time for inspection, and my first thought was that my horse seemed of a very different description to the generality of those in the field—mine being a lengthy thoroughbred, while most of the others were stiff and punchy, looking very like slow and sure.

Independent of the button, I found that the Members of this Hunt might be known by their overalls and cloth caps to their boots. I never saw so many red (or *had been* red) coats with so few top-boots; and some of the wearers looked more as if they were going to plough than to hunt.

I got hold of a good-natured-looking man to tell me the names of some, and began by asking who was the gentleman in the old hat or ragged coat; but I couldn't get on at all with these descriptions, there being scarcely any difference, except from bad to worse, though Lord Gage and Mr Donovan certainly had the worst clothes.

The Plashets (the Splashets would be the more appropriate name) is the property of the noble lord, and whoever goes into it had better follow



Hy. Alken.

In Cover.

him, or they may chance to find themselves planted there. The knowing ones generally keep outside, at least till hounds find, but I do not know that they are any great gainers, and I make no doubt they may often head the fox by their skirting. We had not been in covert very long before a hound challenged and the whole pack joining on the drag as we thought, the outriggers came bustling in, but after we had all penetrated into the thickest part of the wood, we found they had been running a marten cat which, instead of breaking covert, had climbed a tree.

However, we were not very long in finding a fox, and after a most abundant use of his horn, George got the pack settled upon him; having had some good raking about the covert for half an hour or so, he thought he might as well be going, and accordingly broke away at one end, I don't know which. There were two gorse coverts close by, through which he passed, and took the open country with hounds on very good terms with him. It was an excellent scenting day, and the pace for the first half-hour was as fast as heart could wish.

The fencing was very formidable and difficult for horses not accustomed to blind ditches; and most of the field seemed to prefer the hang-gates, reckoning upon their Sussex punches either clearing them or breaking them down.

I thought myself singularly fortunate in getting only one tumble, which was brought about by my horse preferring a flying to an on-and-off leap. A short distance from where I fell a broad brook somewhat checked the progress of the field; when I came up some ten or a dozen of those who *could* take it were over, while two or three who *would* were floundering about in it, and

some twenty who *would not* take it were craning and looking at those who could and would. I was told that a cottager who resides close by makes a good thing every year by fishing out gentlemen and their horses who get in; and he seemed to be pretty busy that day.

I do not know how it was, but we made very little of our fox after we got over the brook; the pace, which had been killing, gradually relaxed into a cold hunting one, and though the pack persevered and worked extremely well, we ultimately lost him near Glynde.

CHAPTER II.

THE EAST SUSSEX—*continued.*

GENERAL ACCOUNT OF RUN ONLY ATTEMPTED—DOINGS OF THE EAST SUSSEX—MR CRAVEN, M.F.H.—HIS QUALITIES—COLONEL COOK ON MASTERS WHO CARRY THE HORN—GEORGE HENNESSEY AND PRESS—A CALF IN DANGER—THE HON. LONG WELLESLEY—DIGGING FOXES—SUPERABUNDANCE THE REASON—QUALIFICATION FOR THE LEWES HUNT STAKES—LARGE FIELDS AT CHRISTMAS—FOREIGN HUNTING MEN—GERMANS THE BEST SPORTSMEN—BARON GABLENZ—HIS HORSES—A BOLD RIDER—THE BARON ON ENGLISH GENTLEMEN—HIS ENGLISH—MONS. DE MORNY.

A STRANGER'S description of country of which he knows nothing save from galloping over it a few times out hunting, when he has something else to do than to make observations, may be very amusing to those who are better acquainted with it, if only to laugh at his blunders; though I think such information is uninteresting to the rest of the world, who do not know whether Chatley Common adjoins Rottingdean, or care whether a fox passed through Newick Park, or headed back to Firle. I do not pretend to attempt anything more than a general description of a country, leaving the accounts of brilliant runs to the abler pen of the local sportsman; and I have mentioned the first day's sport I had with the East Sussex, not because it was anything extraordinary (though I have witnessed some excellent runs with them since), but because

the difference between one pack and another is more striking the first day than afterwards, when a person slides imperceptibly into its ways, and he forgets that he has seen things managed differently elsewhere.

So it is with me at least, and before I left Sussex neither Mr Craven's fly nor George's boots appeared singular, though the latter certainly never appeared clean. The East Sussex Hounds, though with no pretensions (at present, at least) to be called a crack pack (I am informed by a Member of the Hunt that they are the "best in England"), are nevertheless a very fair average pack, and suit their county remarkably well. If anything, perhaps, they are rather slow—a fault, in my opinion, on the right side, for I like to watch the work of the hounds as well as look after my horse.

I have been out with them during the frosty weather in the low woody countries, when a high-bred hound would never stoop to the scent, yet we have had runs of a couple of hours, killing our fox, though I must confess it was rather break-neck work. Give them time, don't over-ride them, and with their perseverance they will show as much sport as two-thirds of the hounds going. I believe they killed somewhere about twenty brace of foxes last season. I am not, however, one of those who think killing a great number a sure mark of sport.

These hounds being much patronised by the Brighton visitors, I need scarcely add that at a certain period of the year the fields are more numerous than scarlet; and I do not know any more troublesome, or fields in the management of which command of temper and gentlemanlike manners are more requisite. In these essentials

the Members of the Hunt and the Brightonians may congratulate themselves on the acquisition of Mr Craven, who is blessed with no small share of both, and I do not believe a better qualified person could be found. As to his abilities as a sportsman, I am not prepared to go the lengths that others have done. Of his Leicestershire performances there are different reports.

Some say he was never much of a rider, while others (and among the number Sir Francis Burdett, no bad authority) say he was reckoned a good sportsman. However, if he was, it is possible he may have forgotten what he learned there. I have two reasons for differing in opinion with previous writers on this point.

In the first place, no thorough-paced sportsman could endure the mobbing, riot, and confusion which frequently take place in the East Sussex field; it would either drive him mad or kill him; whereas Mr Craven has arrived at the end of his second or third campaign with, I hope, if anything an increased stock of health.

Whether he is a good sportsman or not, in the true sense of the word, is of no great importance; it is impossible for any one to be more attached to the chase, and he is allowed to be a scientific breeder. The hunting of the hounds he leaves entirely to George.

Colonel Cook, in his 'Observations on Fox-Hunting,' says that "a gentleman who hunts his own hounds is sure to be fond of the sport, and will do all in his power to show it; while on the contrary, servants hunt for their livelihood, and some of them are more anxious to get home to a two o'clock dinner than to find a second fox."

I admit that the gentleman-huntsman is sure

to be fond of the sport, but I would much rather have an efficient paid servant than an indifferent gentleman-huntsman. But for the East Sussex Hounds the great point, in my opinion, is to have a perfect gentleman at the head of the establishment, and in this regard they have been most singularly successful—for it is by no means an enviable situation, nor one which many people would be ambitious of filling.

Having disposed of the Master, I now come to the Man. Mr Beckford (the best writer we have on the subject), in his 'Thoughts upon Hunting,' says he thinks he would have better sport, and kill more foxes, with a moderate huntsman and an excellent whipper-in than with the best huntsman without such an assistant.

I think the men of the East Sussex Hunt would have delighted Mr Beckford; not that I mean to detract from the merit of George Hennessey, who is a civil painstaking fellow, excellently adapted to his country. With a good clear voice, he is a particularly good covert huntsman and can get at his hounds where others cannot follow; but that I think Press's performances as whipper-in are much superior to his as huntsman, and him I consider the sterling man. George's weight is against him in anything like a burst, and it must indeed be a severe one that beats the whip.

There was occasionally a second whip in the field, but I had no opportunity of judging of his performances. I remember Press played us rather a trick one day in the Splashets (I do not know that he could help it), but he went away with his pack at the fox's brush, and killed him before any one knew they were out of covert.

I heard there was a difference of opinion in the

pack that day, whether they should eat the fox or the calf in whose residence the former had taken shelter. I forgot to mention one very slow trick of George's—that is, persevering in back casts.

The only time I ever saw Mr Craven lose his temper was when the Hon. Long Wellesley told George he saw a fox forward, and the latter still persisted in his back cast (though the gorse was nearly surrounded by horsemen). Mr Wellesley rode through a few acres of rape to tell Mr Craven, who either did not relish his interference, or marked the damage he was doing, and fired a few sharp words at him, which Mr Wellesley was too sensible to take amiss. A report was spread towards the close of the season of a bet made by Mr Craven as to the number of foxes he would kill, and they said (that is, some of the newspapers said) that when one ran to earth he dug him out, for the sake of increasing his total.

Some were dug out certainly, but I am very sure the reason assigned was not the true one. It was after the long frost, when, as you may suppose, the hounds were much in want of blood; moreover, the country in which they were dug was one where foxes were overabundant (I saw no fewer than three leave one small patch of gorse at once), and if the hounds do not kill a fox occasionally, the farmers very soon do it themselves. There was also difficulty in qualifying some of the horses for the Lewes Hunt Stakes, each horse having to be in at a certain number of deaths. I am quite aware, however, that any defence of Mr Craven is quite unnecessary, for no person who knows him would suspect him of an unsportsmanlike act.

The fields with these hounds, except at Christ-

mas, when they muster in hundreds, generally consist of fifty or sixty horsemen: about one-half may be considered as belonging to the Hunt; the rest are Brighton visitors for the season.

Of the gentlemen belonging to the Hunt, I believe Lord Gage is allowed to be one of the best sportsmen, though the Earl of Chichester used to rank before him; I saw the latter keep up in good style one day, on a little chestnut hack, in a run from Cook's Bridge to the Plashets.

Mr Shiffner, Mr Shelley, and Mr Brackenbury are all excellent riders, and Mr Streatfield [1] is as bold, though wanting their judgment. It would puzzle a conjurer to discover when this latter gentleman takes his rest, for when at Brighton he seldom leaves the ballroom until three or four o'clock in the morning, never missing a single dance, and is always at the covert side in good time, be the distance what it may. Nothing like a military education to make men punctual! and he came out of a good school for sportsmen, the Fifth Dragoon Guards, with Colonel Wallace at the head. Among the good sportsmen I must not forget to mention Sir Riggs Falkiner, Mr Kemp, and the Rev. Peter Crofts (brother of the Chaplain to the Oakley); though all belong to the heavies, they are good ones, and will go as long as they can. Mr Donovan goes if his horse chooses to run away with him, when he astonishes every one and no one more than himself. Mr Heysham and Mr Leyton, who are perhaps the best performers in the Hunt, may more properly be called visitors, the former having taken up his quarters at Brighton last year, and the latter during the year before that, I think.

[1] Cousin, I believe, to the gentleman to whom happened the accident in the St Albans steeplechase.

Sir Richard Rycroft, though a merely casual visitor from Mr Villebois' and the Hambledon Hunts, was a pretty regular attendant on the East Sussex during the last season, and always held a good place, except once, when he occupied one very indifferent—viz., in a wet ditch with his horse upon him. His horses were kept at Lewes, a very convenient centre for these hounds; stabling there saves a hunter many a weary mile in the course of the season.

Several foreigners took up their quarters at Brighton last season, French, Germans, Danes, Saxons, &c., nearly all of whom came for the purpose of hunting, though some followed their game in the drawing-room in preference to the field. As field sportsmen the Germans most decidedly took the lead.

At the commencement of the season there were three Germans—viz., Count Pazwaites and Count Patiawney and Nimrod's friend, Count Hans; but the flower of the flock was the Saxon Baron Gablenz. Count Hans and the other two left in December with the intention of going to Leicestershire. I saw them out a few times, and they were all hard riders. Some, if not all, were mounted by Tilbury, a mode which I strongly recommend to all wandering sportsmen, for reasons which I shall take another opportunity of stating.

The Baron had his own horses, for one of which he gave £170, but notwithstanding he was decidedly the worst mounted of the party; however, being a lightweight, he generally kept in the foremost rank, unless (which he was somewhat apt to do) he took a line for himself.

Not knowing what fear was, he neither cared what sort of horse he mounted, nor what sort of a place he rode him at, in consequence of which,

and a naturally loose military seat, he seldom went out without saluting the earth a few times; one day he had so many falls he could not count them. I think he was the boldest rider I ever saw in my life. Of course, from the novelty both of the country and the sport, he could not be expected to exercise much judgment and sometimes attempted impossibilities.

One day he rode at the Ouse about two miles above Lewes, observing that if his horse could not jump quite over it, he would get part way, and might swim the rest. He got into the middle of it where (as he said himself) his horse and he *lived* for a quarter of an hour. I never saw nor heard of a foreigner who entered more fully into the spirit of the English nation or took such delight in hunting as the Baron.

Of English gentlemen he had a very high opinion, and used to say, "By my word, an English gentleman is the first gentleman in the world." It was not, however, to every one that the Baron accorded this title, having as nice a discrimination in these matters as though he had lived in this country all his life. Unable to speak a word of English on his arrival (a few months previous to the time of which I write), it was quite astonishing with what rapidity he learned and with what confidence he spoke it; he generally expressed himself in more comprehensive terms than an Englishman, and his stories and descriptions were rich beyond measure. Coming to covert one morning on a lame hack, some one said to him, "Why, Baron, your horse is lame." "No, my good friend, him not lame," he said, "but he *beaucoup* fatigue in one leg." One day Captain Stanhope, brother of Lady Southampton, was expected out; but not making his appearance, some one asked



Hy. Alken.

The Brook.

the Baron (as they were very intimate) where he was. "Oh, by my word," said he, "poor Stanhope, I think, shall not come to-day. He got von criminal bootmaker, who make his boot so stout that he could not put his leg about; and when I call at Albion this morning I find him dancing about his chamber with one boot on, and deming Charles in the veritable nautical fashion, till at last he could not bear his foot any more, and got a razor and shaved it off."

The Baron passed the whole winter at Brighton, keeping house with a couple of *valets du chambre*, &c. (one to help the other to do nothing), and being a most agreeable gentlemanlike young man, was in great request, and always the life of the society in which he happened to be.

The French Monsieur de Morny (Count, by the courtesy of England) was also there, and judging from the groomish appearance of his garments one would have supposed he was what the ladies call a "horsey man."

He paid penance at the shrine of fox-hunting and took the necessary day's sport to entitle him to say for evermore that he was a fox-hunter, and had hunted in England. He espensed much money (as the Baron expresses it) in his costume for that day, and appeared in a new scarlet, &c. We met at Ditching Hill, I think, but had not any sport, and the Count went home safe and sound with a much better opinion of the thing, I daresay, than if he had had a good run. He had some showy horses, but he was more at home galloping along the cliffs than across country.

CHAPTER III.

THE WEST SUSSEX.

COLONEL WYNDHAM'S OR WEST SUSSEX—MEETS NOT ADVERTISED —MEET AT BRAMBER CASTLE—SOMERVILLE'S STANDARD OF PERFECTION APPLIED TO COLONEL WYNDHAM'S HOUNDS— TOO GOOD FOR THEIR COUNTRY—THE RULE FOR HUNTERS APPLICABLE TO HOUNDS—PREFERENCE FOR A MIXED PACK— ARBER'S WHISTLE—HOUNDS' PROMPT OBEDIENCE THERETO— A HUNT ON THE DOWNS—FAST RUN FROM APPLESHAM GORSE —HUNTING IN FOG—A DAY OF FALLS—PREFERENCE FOR THE EAST SUSSEX—CAPTAIN PECHELL AS PILOT—A GROOM'S IDEA OF "HUNTING EXERCISE."

I NOW arrive at Colonel Wyndham's or the West Sussex.

The nominal boundary between this country and that of the East Sussex is the River Adir, but the two hunts have some coverts on the Brighton side as joint property.

The Colonel has the whole of the west side of the county of Sussex, and, I believe, a covert or two in Hampshire. His is a private pack of hounds, and appointments are not advertised, which makes it rather difficult, in Brighton at least, for a stranger to find out where they meet. The Master, like most other fox-hunters, not being fond of riotous fields, leaves the Findon side of the country about the commencement of the Christmas holidays, and does not return till February, after which there is no difficulty in

ascertaining where hounds meet. When a gentleman keeps a pack of hounds for his own amusement, and allows his friends and neighbours the privilege of hunting with them free of expense, and does not object to seeing an occasional stranger in the field, I believe it is generally understood that those who avail themselves of his kindness are to take things as they find them, and no one is considered at liberty either to criticise or advise.

Private packs of hounds, like other private property, must be respected; and a man has no more right to find fault with the contents of another's kennel than he has to censure his domestic establishment. But if illiberal criticism is forbidden, the just tribute of praise must not be withheld.

The badness of the weather prevented my meeting the West Sussex until their return to the Brighton side of the country, when, hearing that their fixture was at Bramber Castle on the following day, I sent a horse to Shoreham and went by the turnpike, not caring to trust myself over the Downs in foggy frosty weather, for there had been a severe frost during the night; indeed, at one time it was doubtful whether hounds would be able to throw off.

However, punctual to the hour (eleven, I think) they left Bramber, and proceeded to the well-known Toddington Wood. The bitch pack was out, and truly the most fastidious judge in Christendom can find but little to alter in them.

Somerville, a poet whom all modern writers on fox-hunting from Mr Beckford down to Colonel Cook have quoted, thus describes the perfect hound; from which it appears that whatever alterations have taken place in the system of

hunting, the necessary qualifications of a hound remain as in his day:—

"See, there, with countenance blithe,
And with a courtly grin the fawning hound
Salutes thee cowering, his wide opening nose
Upwards he curls, and his large sloe-black eyes
Melt in soft blandishments and humble joy;
His glossy skin, or yellow-pied, or blue,
In lights or shades by Nature's pencil drawn
Reflects the various tints; his ears and legs
Fleckt here and there, in gay enamell'd pride,
Rival the speckled pard; his rush-grown tail
O'er his broad back bends in an ample arch;
On shoulders clean, upright, and firm he stands;
His round cat-foot, straight hams, and widespread thighs,
And his low drooping chest, confess his speed,
His strength, his wind, or on the steepy hill
Or far-extended plain; in every part
So well-proportioned that the nicer skill
Of Phidias himself can't blame thy choice,
Of such compose thy pack."

Read this description and compare with it Colonel Wyndham's pack, and see if his hounds do not agree in every particular. Place the most ignorant before either dog hounds or bitches, and I will be bound for it he will say they look like "goers," if he make no other observation.

But now comes the rub. They are just as fit to hunt chamois in Switzerland as they are foxes in Sussex. I do not mean to say they would not go, and go well, too, in any country, even Switzerland, but I say they are far too good for the one they hunt, and are quite lost in Sussex.

This Arber knows, and Colonel Wyndham knows, and in fact every one who has ever been out with them knows; and the best proof of the Master's knowledge is the fact that he is going to introduce into his kennel the blood from some of the best slow packs: for which purpose Arber has been making a tour of the different establishments.

As Arber said, when looking at a horse which a friend of mine had purchased to ride in a slow hunting country, "A man must suit his horse to his country, sir"; which by parity of reasoning I think he will admit is applicable to hounds. Sussex is not the country for fifteen or twenty-minute bursts; and those who prefer racing to hunting must go elsewhere, or content themselves with a more moderate but longer continued sweat.

I never could understand the wit of separating dogs and bitches. We all know the influence the fair sex possess over the affairs of men, and I see no reason why there should not be "gallant sons of bitches" (as Lord Byron calls them) as well as gallant men. I did not discover any jealousy in the hunting of the dog pack, though they certainly have not killed so many foxes as the bitches, the numbers being eleven and nineteen brace; neither are they so fast, though fast enough in all conscience.

But to return to my first day with them. On arriving at Toddington Wood some grooms were found near with their masters' horses, and the colonel with his usual politeness waited a little for the owners; then he desired Arber to go to the north end of the Wood, and draw down it, the field keeping on the east side, to prevent the fox taking the Downs.

I remained some time expecting to hear a cheer of some sort, but a dead silence prevailed throughout, save an occasional shrill whistle, resembling that of a night hawk; indeed I thought it was one, until riding a little into the covert, I found the night hawk was a huntsman in scarlet—Arber himself whistling to his hounds.

Though an admirer of a quiet covert hunts-

man, I think whistling is bad; it is quite out of keeping, and a man might as well play his hounds a tune on the German flute while they are drawing; though, I believe, whistling is a custom which is rather gaining ground than otherwise. The whistling had not continued very long before we found, when for the first time I heard Arber's voice; and his cheer, which possesses great originality, though I never heard him indulge in one while drawing. Our fox knew his customers, and did not tarry long after being roused. I never saw a pack of hounds get together in covert in the style these did—scarcely a halloo, no blowing of horns, and every hound was upon him, running him through the wood, and crossing a small enclosure in the centre, at one corner of which I was standing; but despite all attempts to prevent him he persisted in making for the hills, and the hounds were called off.

On the 22nd February we met on the Downs on the Brighton side of the Shoreham river, and after drawing the hangers which skirt it, proceeded to try the gorses, where we soon found; but although the place was within a mile of the meet, a main earth in a quarry or precipice which extended down the hillside to the road was open, and the consequence was that we lost our fox. After persevering on the Downs for a couple of hours, Arber at length trotted off over the Dyke Hill to some gorses below, whence we went to Toddington Wood, and found a gallant fox which gave us a run. It was, however, attended by many disagreeables, not the least of which was riding a severe chase on a horse which, before unkenneling this fox, had been on his legs at least five hours; for my own part I should have liked it better if they had not gone quite so fast.

The sport at Applesham on the day but one following was the most curious I ever saw, and for men who prefer racing to hunting it must have been delightful. Applesham Gorse is a favourite meet for the Brightonians, though on this day they did not muster in anything like the number they did on the 22nd.

It is, moreover, very convenient for what Nim North used to designate "Mahogany Sportsmen," or after-dinner hunters. The situation is excellent; the covert large, stretching down a slope to the green valley; while the opposite hill, which is of a somewhat mountainous nature, commands a view, not only of the covert, but of the neighbouring country for a considerable distance; so that from whatever part the fox breaks, he is sure to be viewed away by the field, at least by those who take their station on the hill mentioned. It also bears the character of being a sure find.

I forgot to mention that the fog in Brighton and towards the coast was extremely dense on this day; and though it had forsaken the valleys, it still hung about the tops of the higher hills.

Colonel Wyndham was out, and after drawing several patches of gorse along the Downs to the westward, the hounds were suddenly trotted off, and as Mr Ladbrooke said, evidently were going "straight to their fox." He was right; for after winding round the steepest of the hills, I had scarcely got to the top before they found; and though the whole pack passed within half-a-dozen yards of me, I could not see them, so dense was the fog.

However, there was no time to spare, and having climbed up the hill, the natural thing was to get down again as fast as possible; which, I

assure you, was a proceeding neither easy nor safe. I never saw such tumbling and rolling; horses *sans* riders were scampering about in all directions.

Though near to the hounds (at least so I inferred from being near to those who are always near them), I galloped for at least three miles, as hard as my horse could go, without either seeing or hearing a hound, and about the end we drew clear of the fog and killed our fox in good style. But in that fifteen minutes we had taken the go out of our horses, at least I know I had, that were to have lasted us the whole day; and having no others at hand, we were obliged to return home at one o'clock, and kill the rest of the day as we could.

Of the pleasant gentlemanlike manner in which these hounds are conducted, there can be no difference of opinion; and the fields with Colonel Wyndham's hounds excel those with the East Sussex hounds as much as John Arber excels George Hennessey as a huntsman, or as much as the former pack excels the latter in point of speed; but, after all is said, I am not ashamed to confess I would rather meet the East Sussex hounds, with their riotous fields and all their other imperfections, than Colonel Wyndham's pack with all their high breeding and other Leicestershire qualifications; because with the one I should be sure to see hunting, while with the other the chances are very much against a stranger seeing the hounds after they once leave covert.

Of the riders in this hunt Captain Pechell is a bruiser, and having a horse that will leap anything (even a windmill providing the sails are not going), is very awkward to follow, especially as he has the knack of taking very queer places



F. C. Turner.

Colonel Wyndham's Hounds.

with such apparent ease that a stranger, not knowing his man, may chance to find himself taking a summerset, which, going from one covert to another, he is very likely to do carelessly, that being the time the captain generally chooses for his feats.

I heard of an act of Christian forgiveness arising out of a day's hunting with Colonel Wyndham's hounds last season. Mr Burmister, a very excellent sportsman and a very good fellow, residing at Brighton during the winter, had occasion to go to Town, and left his horses in the care of his groom, with strict orders about exercising, &c., so that they should be fresh on his return.

The groom, thinking "hunting exercise" most proper for hunters, came out to meet these hounds at some place on the Downs, but not being a very expert horseman, he let the horse get away from him; the horse, finding himself at liberty, took care not to let the groom get near him again; and after running about in pursuit till dark, the man gave him up as a bad bargain and walked home. The horse remained out all night. The circumstance being related to Mr Burmister, he sent for his man, and telling him that he knew what he had been doing, added, shaking his head, "It will not happen again, sir; for—I am not going away any more."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEWES AND BROOKSIDE HARRIERS—THE BRIGHTON HARRIERS—SIR HENRY OXENDON'S FOX-HOUNDS.

THE LEWES AND BROOKSIDE HARRIERS—THE REV. DR HOOKER, M.H.—HIS SEVERAL VOCATIONS—TEACHING THE YOUNG IDEA THE ART OF HUNTING—DRESS OF DR HOOKER IN THE FIELD—ACTS AS WHIPPER-IN—HIS PACK A STRONG ONE—HOUNDS ALLOWED TO HUNT UNAIDED—A REMINISCENCE OF SCHOOL-DAYS—WRATH OF THE FAMILY COACHMAN—RUN WITH A CUR DOG—EAST SUSSEX A GOOD HARE-HUNTING COUNTRY—DOWNS HARES FAITHFUL TO THE DOWNS—SIR ROBERT WILMOT'S RETIREMENT—THE BRIGHTON HARRIERS—A DIFFERENT MASTER FOR EACH MEET—EXTRAVAGANT METHODS—A COBBLER'S TRENCHER-FED PACK—TOO MUCH POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE—CAPPING—THE PACK CRITICISED—COLONEL COOK OPPOSED TO CAPPING—MR OXENDON'S AT WALDERSHARE—EARLY DEATH OF A BAGMAN—THE BIG MAN IN RED—SIR HENRY OXENDON AND HIS SON'S GROOM—CAPPING A "CHARGE" WITH THE BRIGHTON HARRIERS.

HAVING now said my say respecting the fox-hounds in the neighbourhood of Brighton, I must have a word or two about the "currant jelly" boys.

The Lewes and Brookside Harriers are well deserving of notice, as well on account of the amusement they afford as the quiet unassuming manner in which they are conducted. They have been established for many years, the precise time I do not remember, but believe it to be at least half a century. This Hunt boasts a personage

whose equal is not to be found in any other in England. Few would credit that the duties of clergyman, a schoolmaster, and a Master of Hounds could be united in one and the same person without the pleasures of the latter interfering with the labours of the former. Such, however, are the achievements of Dr Hooker of Rottingdean. The Doctor is the son of a gentleman who formerly kept a school at Tonbridge Wells, from which place he was inducted by a noble Duke to the Vicarage of Rottingdean, where he has ever since lived on the income of his living and the proceeds of (to use the language of the kennel) a walk to enter boys for Eton, that being the only school for which he condescends to train.

Some thirty years ago my informant, the Hon. Long Wellesley, was under his tuition, with about a dozen other youths, sons of the nobility or principal gentry in England, and here it was that Mr Wellesley first imbibed that passion for the chase which, increasing with years, ultimately produced a finished sportsman.

The Doctor, in addition to his own two hunters, possessed an old pony that the longest day's work was never known to tire; and on this animal one or other of the dozen boys used to be mounted three days each week to accompany the Doctor, he being, as Mr Wellesley observed, a man much above vulgar prejudices; and not considering it sufficient that the young idea should be taught only to shoot, he instructed it in the art of hunting also—whipping the hounds in the mornings and the boys in the afternoons.

I was much amused at the Doctor's outward man the first time I saw him with these hounds. Instead of the shovel hat, he sported a black

velvet cap and a rifle-green or black coat, with a black sailor's jacket over it; drab smalls, tremendously baggy drab overalls, and a massive silver-mounted jockey whip. Though his cap would lead one to infer that he hunted the hounds himself, such is not the case, there being a very clever well-mounted huntsman, a native of Sussex, to whom the Doctor acts as whipper-in, the only one I ever saw with a jockey whip. The Doctor must have had a good deal of hunting in his time, and though now well on to fourscore years, takes his three days every week with the Brookside at their respective meets, Ashcombe, Newmarket Hill, and Telescombe Tye, besides visiting the East Sussex whenever they are near, and sometimes taking a peep at Colonel Wyndham's.

The Doctor and his people must be strong in hounds, for they always have twenty or two-and-twenty couple in the field.

They are generally allowed to be a most distinguished pack, and with them you see the true essence of hunting—every hound at work, either trying for the hare, upon the scent, or endeavouring to recover it when lost or overrun; and there is none of that lifting or hallooing, which though sometimes useful, nay necessary, with fox-hounds, is, I think, inexcusable with harriers, especially in a county where hares are so abundant as in Sussex. The huntsman seems to be aware that hounds hunt naturally, and lets them do the work themselves, never assisting but when absolutely necessary.

Talking of hounds hunting naturally reminds me of a circumstance that occurred many years ago when I was at school. It was during a Christmas holiday, and the ground was covered with snow, which had lain some time owing to a con-



THE REV. DR HOOKER.

tinued frost. Wandering near the house I suddenly heard a pack of hounds in full cry in a neighbouring wood. I immediately ran to the stable, and putting a bridle on the nearest horse, I took him out, clothing and all, and rode straight for the covert. There I found some ten or twelve couple of harriers in full cry, as I said before, and nobody with them. I soon saw by the pad on the snow that they had a fox on foot, and though the day was piercingly cold, they ran him for several miles without a check. By riding up to them I could always see which way he had taken, and it was really interesting to watch how they recovered themselves each time they overran the scent, and the casts they made to regain it. How long they had run him before I joined them I never heard, but I daresay I was with them two hours at least; and I make no doubt, if the governor had not happened suddenly to come upon me as I was sitting on my sheeted nag watching them make a cast over a brickfield, and there had been daylight sufficient, we should either have run or *walked* into our fox.

My father, a thorough-paced sportsman, seemed to think it rather a good joke to see a horse out hunting in clothing, and without a saddle, and merely said, "But, d——n it, lad, why did not you take the sheets off?" upon which I explained that I had been in a hurry.

But the coachman (for, as luck ordained, it was one of the carriage horses I was riding), who from long service had acquired the privileges claimed by old servants, took the liberty of wishing me in a very hot place for taking his horse out on such a very cold day. You may imagine the sort of weather from the fact that this trusty domestic, having to go to a place some distance

off, walked in preference to taking out one of his carriage-horses.

The Brookside Harriers used formerly to hunt foxes as well as hares. Indeed, I am not certain that they were not like a pack lately kept by a friend of mine, whose chaw-bacon of a huntsman or whipper-in used to boast that they would hunt "ouse whick," meaning thereby anything alive; and I believe he was a man of veracity, for I once saw them run a black cur dog in view for nearly a mile, with the chaw hallooing them on, or screaming them on, as he called it himself, doubtless thinking the cur made an excellent run of it.

On the establishment of the East Sussex Hunt, the Brookside very properly confined themselves to hare-hunting, and I found some men—sportsmen, too—who hunted with them in preference to the former. The truth is that Sussex, at least Mr Craven's part, is a bad fox-hunting but a good hare-hunting county, and harriers suit many of the Brightonians better than fox-hounds. With harriers they are not tied down to any particular hour, but can just ride out after breakfast or after luncheon (if any sportsmen eat luncheon), and are generally sure of finding one pack or another.

I cannot say that I am an admirer of Down hunting: it affords neither riding nor anything else, and as a Downs hare never leaves them, it is merely galloping down one steep hill to gallop up another, which, though seemingly very easy, requires, in my opinion, a horse made for the purpose as well as a set of nerves, for I know nothing so disagreeable as to find a horse running away with one down a "hassocky" hill, with the certainty that his nose will be run into the oppo-

site one before he gets half-way up. The only advantage in Down hunting is that you may sit on the top of a hill and see everything that takes place, and I always grudge riding a horse after harriers.

While speaking of the Brookside, I have to lament the illness of a very old sportsman and a very excellent man, who was one of the pleasantest companions in the field—Sir Robert Wilmot, Bart., of Chaddesdon in Derbyshire and Kempton in Sussex. He has long been known and respected in the sporting world, and I was sorry when I saw a groom riding his favourite hunter for sale. Calling on the worthy baronet a few days after, I learned that he had been ordered to give up hunting altogether.

Sir Robert possesses what must be highly gratifying to all sportsmen, and I wonder his example is not more often followed: he owns paintings of all his favourite horses from early life down to the present time.

The fields with the Brookside are pretty much the same as those that meet the East Sussex; and whatever else I have to say respecting these hounds shall be included in my notice of the Brighton Harriers, which are conducted more in the style of fox- or stag-hounds than any harriers I ever saw. There is a huntsman and a whipper-in, in green plush coats and caps, with a different Master for every meet; there is a hunt stable in the town and a kennel a little way out, and altogether there is "a very great cry for very little wool."

Harriers do not require all this fuss and parade; it may please the Cockneys, to be sure, but sportsmen know it is all nonsense. The best harriers I ever saw were trencher-fed, and hunted entirely

by a cobbler on foot; and although it was an enclosed country, the hounds were seldom, if ever, known to beat him. Colonel Cook mentions a pack of fox-hounds that were kept in a similar manner by some farmers somewhere in Essex (sixteen couple, I think) that seldom or ever missed a fox, and were called the "Invincibles." He says there was—

> "Invincible Tom and Invincible Towler,
> Invincible Jack and Invincible Jowler."

But at Brighton they turn out with all the pomp and circumstance imaginable, with Master and servants and half as many hounds again as are necessary. With this array they have also hare-finders, and the hounds, instead of hunting, are staring about, wondering why the deuce they don't start one. But this is not the mischief. If people can afford it, and are fond of that sort of thing, no one would mind how many servants, horses, or hounds they took into the field; but here is a Hunt which, according to the manager's own showing, is always in difficulties, and yet carried on at double the necessary expense, to meet which they are reduced to the expedient of charging every person in the field half a crown for seeing a hare killed; and weekly appeals are made through the newspaper to the already over-burdened lodging-house keepers to contribute to its support. If the funds of the Hunt are inadequate, let the managers reduce the expenditure to a level with their means, and by dispensing with one-third of their hounds, and hunting the pack themselves, instead of hunting the half-crowns, they will be able to dispense with one, at least, of their green-coated gentry together with his horses.

A hare is not like a wild boar that requires the aid of numbers to subdue (though the Mayor of Norwich did say when, hunting for the first time, he was told that the hare was coming, "Let her come, who's afraid!"), and twelve couple of hounds in the field are as many as ever I should wish to see.

The pack when I saw it very much wanted heading and tailing; this, if done with judgment, would make it a very neat one, though nothing can reconcile me to those greatest of nuisances, "hare-finders." The system of capping, though formerly pretty general, is now almost entirely abandoned elsewhere.

Colonel Cook, though at first an advocate of cap-money, changed his opinion, having seen, as he says, many days' sport marred by it, in proof of which he relates divers instances of huntsmen turning down bag foxes, hallooing hounds on to hare, &c., &c.

From the opportunities I have had of judging, I should say that Masters of Hounds are decidedly averse to it, and I never paid cap-money but twice in my life (except to fox-diggers)—once with Mr Oxendon's hounds in Kent, and once with the Brighton Harriers.

I was at Lord Guildford's at Waldershare, on the 10th of November, I think, when we found in the "Wilderness," which, though its name would lead one to suppose it a covert, is neither more nor less than a very neat shrubbery within twenty yards of the mansion, and which, after all the neighing and whistling that took place for an hour before we threw off, I should as soon have thought of drawing for a fox as I should his Lordship's dining-room.

Luckily for the assembled multitude, Mr Oxen-

don knew more about the matter than I did; and putting his hounds into the "Wilderness" (the butler having previously put a fox there) they found immediately, and a big man in a red coat and low-crowned hat exhausted his lungs by tally-hoing him from the summit of a building like a church steeple. The butler, however, in his hurry, had omitted to tell the fox which way to go, and being a perfect stranger, he merely crossed the park to a neighbouring covert, in which he was killed; and the same big man in red, carrying him into the nearest green field, all the horsemen assembled, with Sir Henry Oxendon in his yellow cab, Mrs Bailey in her barouche, and two men in a yellow post-chaise from Canterbury (all excellent leapers and very fast, as Tattersall says); and his brush was presented to Master Bailey, and his body given to the hounds. While they were eating him, the same big man in red took off his low-crowned hat, and capped every individual in the field 2s. 6d., even to the gentlemen in the yellow post-chaise. I am not much in the habit of speculating, but I durst have given Tom Arnold (the huntsman) five pounds for his share of it; indeed, I was quite afraid the man's hat crown would be stove through with the weight of money.

Though Mr Oxendon does allow of capping, he is a good sportsman, and whether his horses are good or bad, he can make them go. They tell a good story of him at Cambridge.

His father, Sir Henry, a bit of a sportsman, had gone down there to see his son, and meeting some twelve or fourteen couple of very nice-looking hounds exercising on the road, he pulled up and asked a Cockneyish sort of groom that accompanied them who they belonged to. "Oh,

sir, they belongs to my Lord H'Oxendon, sir," said the fellow, touching his hat. "Lord H'Oxendon?" said Sir Henry; "and pray, who the deuce is he?" "Vat, not know my Lord H'Oxendon of —— College?" rejoined the groom; "vy, he be one of the nicest chaps we has. Lord bless you, sir, he cares no more for a guinea than another man does for a shilling!" "The devil he don't!" said Sir Henry; "I have got twelve other Lord H'Oxendons besides him!"

But I am rather digressing from my subject, which was that of capping with hounds.

I am a great advocate for paying servants of all descriptions well, whether huntsmen, grooms, helpers, or what not; but I am averse to letting them expect as a right what ought to rest in the option of the donor; and I would much rather put five shillings unseen into the hand of a huntsman after a good run, than two shillings and sixpence into the hat of any person who may choose to take upon himself the office of tax-gatherer. I am sure there is no one who would not prefer making his present to a meritorious servant in his own way to throwing it into a common purse, to be distributed at the caprice of the collector.

The Brighton Harriers have caused these remarks, because with them the money is "charged," as it were, and gathered by the Master of the Hounds, though I have no hesitation in saying it was neither for the huntsman nor whipper-in, which is the only excuse for the custom. So having stated the objection, and prescribed a remedy for their circumstances, I trust they will not persevere in an attempt to convert into commerce that which was intended to be, and always has hitherto been, an amusement.

In conclusion, I offer you the following quotation from my friend Somerville in proof of my latter assertion :—

"Ye vigorous youths, by smiling Fortune blest,
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth,
Heap'd copious by your forefather's care,
Hear and attend ! while I the means reveal
T'enjoy those pleasures, for the weak too strong,
Too costly for the poor ! To rein the steed
Swift stretching o'er the plain, to cheer the pack
Opening in consorts of harmonious joy,
But breathing death."

CHAPTER V.

ROYAL STAGHOUNDS, ENGLISH AND FRENCH.

THE ROYAL STAG-HOUNDS—NO ADMIRATION FOR CARTED DEER HUNTING—"MACADAMITES"—THE STAG UNCARTED—ITS PREFERENCE FOR THE HIGH-ROAD—REFUGE WHEN TIRED—THE FOREST OF FONTAINEBLEAU—THE ROYAL *CHASSE*—METHOD OF ASSEMBLING GAME—A *GRAND CHASSE AU CERF*—CHARLES X.'S COACH—AND ESCORT—"KICKSHAWS"—A DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE OPERA—THE FRENCHMAN'S CARE FOR HIS MEALS—COUNT D'ORSAY'S BOOTS—SILENT RECEPTION OF THE KING—HIS YOUTHFUL ACTIVITY—HIS HUNTING DRESS—THE TURIN HUNTSMAN AND DOUBLE DITCHES—FOREST HUNTING—DEATH OF THE STAG—MANY HOUNDS KILLED IN FRENCH HUNTING—A DAY WITH THE ROYAL HUNT AT COLNBROOK.

FAIN would I pass from the Sussex fox-hounds to those in the neighbourhood of London; but the world has long accorded precedence to the stag-hounds, and when we remember that Royalty itself is at the head of the list of owners, we cannot, perhaps, repine at the decision.

There are many men in London whose occupations are such that, unless it were for the stag-hounds, they would never see a day's sport throughout the year. These, I think, may be divided into two classes—your dandy Cockney sportsman, in his neat new pink, natty leathers and well-cleaned "pipe-cases," who likes to ride through Brentford or Croydon, to exhibit his person to the ladies; the other is your regular Mark Lane man, or perhaps "a black diamond merchant" from St Mary

Axe, who, nearly suffocated with bad air and dying from indigestion, gets outside a rough-going nag to shake his intestines about, and to have what he calls a good gallop. The regular stag-hunters are mostly veterans from the fox-hunting ranks who, finding the pace begins to kill them, discard the red coat, adopt the "merry, merry green" to follow the stag-hounds and macadamise with them till death closes the scene.

In my opinion, stag-hunting, as followed in England, is the tamest of all sports; there is neither stimulus nor science about it, and, by heavens, I would rather ride thirty miles to meet fox-hounds, though the chances were five to one against a find, than be driven ten miles on the best drag ever built to see a stag uncarted before hounds. Nay, I would fifty times sooner go double the distance to meet a pack of good harriers. With these, at all events, I should have the pleasure of watching the hounds trying for their game; but with the stag-hounds, a great fat lubberly thing, after being well shaken up for some miles in a closed covered cart, is turned out, half stupefied, to be mobbed by all the foot-people and perhaps by half the horsemen.

After staring about he begins to feel his legs, and away he goes at a *petit trot*, as the French call it, after which, if he does not lie down, he gradually breaks into a gallop, obstinately keeping the high-road, never by any chance missing a pay-gate (in fact, one might fancy he was in league with the toll-keepers), and if from compulsion or by choice he does do a little country, a sharp-eyed man may see him topping the hedges for miles.

For the first half-hour or so he is troubled with his attendants—the horsemen; but having shaken them off, he begins to take things quietly, and if

he knows his country, which most deer do, he will either make for his favourite barn or outhouse (the owner of which is sure to have it open for his reception, and perhaps a glass of something to cool his coppers with), or if the day be sultry he will betake himself with all convenient speed to some large pond, where he will lie wallowing and watching his friends approach. This, forsooth, is what they call "standing at bay!"

But Heaven knows what the poor beast is to defend himself with except it be his heels, for they always take care to deprive the stag of his horns. Well, then, when he is thus standing, or rather lying, at bay—for one is just as good a term as the other,—the huntsman, keeping back the hounds, sends a whipper-in into the water with a halter, which he slips over the deer's head, and marches him off to the nearest house—not to kill, but either to wait till he gets a little refreshed so as to give them another "gallop," or if they have had *quantum suff*, to wait for his carriage to take him home again. So that, altogether, it is doubtful whether the stag, the hounds, or the hunters have the best fun.

Do not, however, suppose that I should be any better pleased were the poor animal killed. On the contrary, he is too inoffensive to wish his death; but I think a stag-hunt might be made a noble diversion, by blending the English and the French styles. Ours is too tame; the French too sanguinary.

In the first place, the stag must be in a state of nature, not kept like a donkey in a farmyard and fed out of a sieve.

In the forest of Fontainebleau, which is one of the French King's favourite *chasses*, there are some very fine red deer; they are as wild as hawks,

and fly from the approach of man. The forest is of immense extent, between thirty and forty thousand acres, exhibiting a great variety of scenery, and rendered explorable by a multiplicity of avenues. The name of each avenue is painted on a signpost at the end, but as these do not intimate whither the avenues lead, they are of little service to any but the initiated, and it is by no means advisable to wander far from the town without a map or guide. The palace is in the centre of the forest, and from the heights affords a very singular view, being entirely surrounded by the wood, as far as the eye can reach. Here at certain seasons, generally about September or October, the Royal *Chasse* takes up its quarters, and the Court is removed to Fontainebleau for the time.

I was there a few years ago in the hunting season. His Majesty did not come, but the Duc d'Angoulême was present, and I went out on foot, at the risk of my life from the awkwardness of the sportsmen.

A particular district of the forest had been appointed as the rendezvous, into which, early in the morning, the keepers had driven the game; and instead of laying the dogs (for hounds I cannot call them) on to one animal at a time, they had all sorts on foot at once—stags, hinds, hares, boars, wolves, pheasants, rabbits, partridges; in fact, nothing came amiss, and they blazed away right and left. The Dauphin having secured a good berth, the keepers endeavoured to drive the animals so as to let him have a shot, and thus they went on slaughtering *ad infinitum*, making a sort of mixture of hunting and shooting.

I have, however, seen a better thing than this with the Royal Hounds.

I was walking on the Boulevard des Italiens

one morning, having just turned out of a café where I had had breakfast. I met a friend who told me the King, or "Robin de Bois," as his subjects call him, was going to have a *Grand Chasse au Cerf* the next day near St Germain. We therefore went to Mr Hurst, the English livery-stable keeper in the Place Madelaine, and engaged a couple of steeds. Not knowing exactly where they would meet, we sent our horses on to Versailles early in the morning, and my friend drove me over in his cab.

The Court and "Robin" were at St Cloud, about half-way between Paris and Versailles, and after crossing the bridge, we were making our way up the steep hill by Severs, when up galloped a cuirassier, sword in hand, and desired us to get into the ditch as quick as we liked, for *Le Roi* was coming. We had hardly complied with his request before a strong advance bodyguard, consisting of twenty or thirty lancers, came past at a hand-gallop, clattering over the stones and making a most tremendous row. Immediately after followed a splendid coach, the whole body gilded, with the white fleur-de-lys and the arms of France on the panels, with four footmen in state liveries stuck up behind. It was drawn by eight short-tailed bay English horses, six-in-hand, and on the leader a postilion in a cocked hat, blue-and-silver laced coat, and immense jack-boots, with a thing like a trunk at the top in which a man might carry a day's provisions.

In the carriage was His Majesty with one or two others, and by the doors rode the equerries and all sorts of laced fellows. Then came another carriage-and-eight in the same style, without any one in it, and another body of heavy cavalry brought up the rear.

The whole party passed at such a pace that they were out of sight before we had well recovered from the start the cuirassiers gave us; but, as my friend said, there was no reason why one horse should not go as quick as eight, so we whipped on. His Majesty, however, beat us by a mile and a distance at least out of the four we had to go.

Frenchmen are capital fellows for taking care of their stomachs. If one sets off to *voyage* ten miles, he will stop at the fifth to get "kickshaws" for his inside. I remember this word "kickshaws" puzzled me amazingly the first time I was in France. I could speak no word of French except *beaucoup* and *combien;* and being at the opera one night, I wanted very much to get into a box where there was a very pretty girl, and accordingly made signs to the woman who had the key that I wanted it opened.

She kept jabbering something, not one word of which I understood, and I kept first pointing to the door, and then to the key in her hand; but no, it would not do. She went on talking, and every now and then I heard that word "kickshaws." Seeing a great hairy heathen with half a dozen decorations at his buttonholes approach along the passage, I thought the woman meant that the lady in the box was private property, and I should stand a chance of being kicked out if I went in, so I walked off. With increasing knowledge I now spell that word "*quelque chose.*"

Well, King Charles the Tenth found a craving in his stomach when he got to Versailles, so he drove to the palace to get some "bon-bons," and we went to the Hôtel de Reservoir in the Avenue de Roi to get our horses.

I forgot to mention that my friend's groom was

a Frenchman; he did not omit to let me know it, for we found that he had stuffed our valuable hunters with hay, corn, and water to the tune of three shillings English money; and when we abused him for his stupidity, he said with true French self-sufficiency that we were wrong, "for that a full belly never made a bad day's work." We mounted our pampered steeds (the first time they had ever been used so well in their lives, I daresay) and jogged on towards St Germain *en laye*, following in the wake of a knot of Parisian dandies. One was a most particular swell: tight, well-fitted leathers; the very identical pair of boots that Warren describes the man shaving himself by. "Warren's Best" or "Hunt's Matchless" stood no chance with them, for they were made of black patent leather, and the tops were painted white!

The fame of those boots was almost equal to that of Jack the Giant-killer's seven-league boots, and had travelled from the eternal city to the capital of France, and as soon as I saw them I said, "That is Count D'Orsay!" He used to exhibit himself in them at Rome, having had them sent from Paris. Beau Valdis was also of the party; the rest were strangers to me.

Just as we reached the forest the King came up in the same style as that in which he passed us on the road, only with fresh horses and guards. The cavalcade halted by some houses on the roadside, where the saddle-horses were waiting, together with the hounds, the lieutenant and sub-lieutenant of the forest in uniform, *gardes*, rangers, both horse and foot, a large mob of people, and a party of *gendarmerie*. The King at that time, two years ago, certainly was not popular; neither at a review, a fête, a horse-race, a hunt, nor anything

did I ever see him greeted with acclamations such as always was accorded to our own late lamented sovereign. The police generally make an attempt to raise the cry of *Vive le Roi!* but frequently theirs are the only voices heard.

For my own part, I like King Charles; I always give him an old English huzza, and did so on this day. He returned it not with a bow and his hand on his breast, but by a good John Bull nod; so familiar was it that I thought he was going to ask me to take a beefsteak with him after the hunt. I do not think I ever saw such a man for seventy and upwards as the King of France—upright and active, with much more life about him than the Duc d'Angoulême. He stepped out of his carriage and mounted his horse (a fine thoroughbred grey, with no end of trappings and nets to keep him warm) with all the agility of a man of twenty. His dress resembled that of an English country gentleman on market-day—an old white hat, a cutty green coat, old drab breeches and top-boots. I never saw such boots except in Sussex. I think they must have been a pair he brought over with him when he left Bucks.

The hounds (though the people swore they were not) were evidently large English fox-hounds; at least had been so originally, some of them appearing to have a cross of the bull in them.

There were plenty of attendants, both mounted and foot, all dressed in the Royal livery, dark blue and silver, some of them wearing badges. There were also three or four huntsmen, all capital fellows in their way, with immense saddles, great bits, and jack-boots. In riding they much resembled the one at Turin who declined jumping double ditches, described by Mr Beckford.

Says this author in his 'Thoughts upon Hunt-

ing': "I must tell you that one day the stag, which is very unusual, broke covert and left the forest, a circumstance which gave as much pleasure to me as displeasure to all the rest; it put everything into confusion.

"I followed one of the huntsmen, thinking he knew the country best, but it was not long before we separated; the first ditch we came to stopped him.

"I, eager to go on, hallo'd out to him, 'Allons, piqueur, sautez donc.'

"'Non pardi,' replied he very coolly, 'c'est un double fosse—je ne saute pas les double fosses.'"

I thought we should have had a scramble together, King and all, and I might have got that invitation out of him; but no, "Keep back the mob" was the order of the day, and Robin de Bois and two or three of his cronies joining the hounds, five or six *gendarmes*, on long-tailed black horses, made a division between Royalty and us. The keepers, knowing where to find their game, went straight to the lair of a buck with fine branching antlers, and laid the hounds on. We all stood in the avenue, ears open to catch the *à droit's* and *à gauche's* hallo'd out by the *gardes* to intimate which way the stag was running.

At last the King set off galloping, the gendarmes scrambling after him as fast as they could, and keeping us at an infinite distance; and thus we went tearing up one avenue and down another, and round a third, for a couple of hours, the stag every now and then popping across the road with the hounds in full cry, till at last he fairly left the forest, and after running for a mile or two, stood at bay under a rock, and had insinuated his horns into the bowels of one dog before the King arrived. One of the *gardes*

handing him a blunderbuss, His Majesty shot the stag dead on the spot, amid the playing of bugles and bellowing of hounds. The sport was ended—Royalty was satisfied; the unfortunate stag was left to be mangled by the keepers.

The coach-and-eight and the guards were brought up. The King dismounted, and stepping into it rattled off in state.

Luckily for the French they do not set much value upon their hounds, else the numbers that are killed would break the heart of any huntsman. It seems almost incredible, but I know for a fact that the Prince of Condé has two hundred couple of fox-hounds sent over every year from England to Chantilly, so great is the mortality, or rather destruction, in his establishment. It must, however, be remembered that he hunts all the year round.

I fear you will think I have wandered far from my thesis, viz., the hounds from London, but hunting is hunting all the world over, and I shall come to the others in time.

I have described a day's hunting with the French King. I have never had the honour of hunting with an English King, notwithstanding I have with an English King's stag-hounds, hunted by the immaculate Arthur Davis. It is three years last season since I hunted with them.

The last day I attempted to get to them was that on which Don Miguel made his appearance, he having a greater contempt for the pitiless showers that drenched my unfortunate skin than I had, for they compelled me to hide my diminished head in the Red Lion in Hounslow instead of going to Windsor to hunt in company with his Donship.

The only difference I saw between His Majesty's

stag-hounds and any others was the gold lace on the scarlet coats of the men; and as they generally turn out near Slough, Windsor, or Eton, in addition to the numerous mounted scarlet-coated gentry, there is not infrequently an immense assemblage of dismounted scarlet jackets in the field, consisting of privates of the Life Guards, who make a very good run of it at times, and are very fond of laying well in with the deer.

One day we turned out by Colnbrook, whence the stag ran a ring twice over; and such is the abundance of high-roads and green lanes in those parts that, in the course of a two hours' gallop, I had not to take a single leap.

CHAPTER VI.

MR SULLIVAN'S AND THE SURREY STAG-HOUNDS.

CHANGES IN THE STAG-HUNTS NEAR LONDON—MR SULLIVAN'S AT DAWLEY HALL—A HUNTING NOVICE—THE STAG INDUCED TO START—DRESS OF MASTER AND SERVANTS—A GOOD PACK OF HOUNDS—STAG MISTAKEN FOR DONKEY—INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY FOLK—ANXIETY CONCERNING THAT NOVICE—INQUIRIES—THE NOVICE RUN TO GROUND—LOST SHOES—THE EPPING HUNT—LORD DERBY'S HOUNDS AND DEER GIVEN TO HIS HUNTSMAN—CONVERTED INTO SUBSCRIPTION PACK—NOISY FOOT-PEOPLE—RIOTOUS HOUNDS—JONATHAN GRIFFITH AS HORSEMAN—AS HUNTSMAN—THE STAG WELL AWAY—STAG-HUNTING "NOT A DISTINGUISHED SPORT"—OLD MATTHEW'S HUNTING STORIES—MODE OF ANNOUNCING HIS DEATH.

GREAT changes have taken place in the management of the different stag-hound packs about London within the last few years. Those which were formerly hunted by the Berkeleys are now managed by Mr Sullivan; and the Earl of Derby's seem to belong to a joint-stock company, with Messrs Maberly and Richard Tattersall as directors.

I was out with Mr Sullivan's hounds on the 9th of March, when they had one of the best runs of the season. We met, or turned out, at Mr Tattersall's farm, Dawley Hall, about fourteen miles from Hyde Park Corner, between the Windsor and Uxbridge roads. I was accompanied by a "Cockneyshire" friend, who had lately purchased a hunter of me, and had never seen a hound of any sort. By bumping about in the riding-school

he had acquired a pretty stiff military seat, ill-adapted for riding across a country. However, he was a very apt pupil indeed; and before we passed through Hammersmith I had shortened his stirrups considerably, and given him a few directions about putting his horse fairly to his leaps, and never to mind a tumble—so long as he did not break his neck,—and to stick by his horse if he wished his horse to stick by him, &c., &c. Some one had told me that Dawley Hall was only twelve miles from Hyde Park Corner, and I had not sent a horse on, but set off on my hunter to ride quietly down with my friend, intending to do it in two hours and a half.

It looks very cock-tail to ride through the streets of London in a scarlet coat, so I hid mine under a greatcoat, but found it so warm that I was obliged to cast it before I got to Holland House; and then I had to ride through Hammersmith, Turnham Green, Brentford, and Hounslow, which form almost a continuous street for ten miles—in fact, one is not in the country this side of Hounslow. We got to Dawley Hall about half-past eleven (eleven is the nominal hour), and here found thirty or forty horsemen assembled in the court before the house, the hounds being in a barn behind.

The deer was shortly after handed into his travelling carriage, and we all proceeded to a very large grass field at the back of Dawley Hall, where he alighted. He was the fattest fellow I ever saw, and seemed uncommonly stupid; however, one of the whippers-in "rode him," and with a liberal application of whipcord persuaded him into a canter, followed as usual by half the field, *it being an established rule in stag-hunting that people may either ride after the stag or the hounds.*

I prefer the latter, and therefore remained where I was, not expecting to have anything like a gallop. Among those out was a foreigner on a fine grey horse, who seemed to have no great opinion of the sport, and I heard him say to a friend, "I think this shall not be very distinguished amusement; I shall me go home." And he did.

After the stag had been at large a quarter of an hour or so, Mr Sullivan and the hounds came up, attended by two whippers-in. Mr Sullivan, a young man, rather tall, with a nice figure, is a lightweight; he sported the black velvet cap, *à la* Oxendon, and a plain scarlet frock, with a black or dark blue collar to it. He carried a horn (which he could not blow) slung over his shoulder. The servants were dressed in the same manner, and seemed handy fellows.

The hounds are small, but they are a beautiful pack, with plenty of music, and can go "the pace that kills." Like all stag-hounds they were rather riotous at first, but as soon as they settled on the scent, got together in good style. The stag had been *davered* by the salutes of the brick-makers and country people, and he made some queerish tacks about Staines, hence the hounds were at fault for a few seconds.

While casting, a very gingerbread-looking fellow came up, and some one asked him if he had seen the stag. "S-t-a-a-g!" said he. "No, I've not seen him; I met a donkey as I trotted along."

However, the hounds took up the scent of the donkey, and went away with it in good style. Just as we turned out a drizzling rain set in, otherwise it was a very fine and an excellent scenting day. After the stag cleared Staines, he took up a line of country and persevered in it,



A. Cooper, R.A.

The Meet.

passing below Colnbrook. Here I threw a shoe and pulled up, twenty miles from town. I got it replaced, and set my horse's head towards the smoke of London. Stag-hunting seems to be the popular sport in these parts. Not a waggoner did I meet on the road but inquired what sort of a chase we had had, and all the little boys kept hallooing after me, "I say, measter, vere did you take him?"

I knew they would not believe me if I said I had thrown a shoe, so I told them we had run him to Great Marlow in Bucks, some ten miles farther than I had been, and they went away quite satisfied.

Coming home from fox-hunting there is nothing I like so much as to be asked by a farmer or a labourer what sport we have had. The question "Did you kill him?" is sure to follow. If I say, "No, we ran him to earth in such a place," my friend is done; but say we killed him, and his eyes sparkle with pleasure, then nothing but an account of the run will satisfy him.

I got back to town about five o'clock, having ridden between forty and fifty miles, stopping half an hour at Cranford Bridge to feed my horse.

The following day I thought to ask how my friend was after his first day's hunting, and took his stable in my way to his residence to have a look at the horse.

"Well, John, what time did your master get home last night?" I inquired.

"Oh, sir!" said the groom, shaking his head, and with a face like a travelling donkey's, "he's not cast up yet."

"Not cast up yet! Nor his horse either?"

"No, sir, neither of them," sighed John. "I much fear they have happened an accident."

"Good God! What have I done?" said I, bolting out of the mews. "I have taken an eldest son, an heir-at-law, and I do not know what else, out hunting and broken his neck, I daresay, and on a horse, too, that he bought of me."

I do not think I ever was in such a fright in my life; and hurrying along the street, cursed myself for my folly, wondering what the deuce I should say to his father and mother, grandmother, uncles and aunts, resolving never to take another Cockney out hunting.

In this state of agitation I arrived at the door of his brother's lodging in —— Street, having, in my hurry, upset a blind ballad singer and run foul of the barrow of a dog's meat man.

"Is your master at home?" said I to the servant.

"No, sir, he is gone down to Eton," said the fellow.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"Don't know, sir," said the man, as I thought, in a very suspicious and mysterious manner; "he went out suddenly and merely told me that."

"Then it's true!" said I to myself. "He is dead, and his brother is gone to bring up his remains."

And away I ran to his lodgings. Oh, what a relief it was when, knocking at his door, his servant said his master was upstairs!

Sure enough, there he was, reading Zimmerman on Solitude, and eating eggs and muffins, the only damage he had sustained being the loss of a little leather.

It appeared that they ran the stag to Sunning Hill, where they took him, and my friend had accomplished the run in good style without a single fall. However, he said he found his horse

very "lazy" after it, and returning through Windsor Forest some one informed him that he had lost both his fore-shoes. So reaching Windsor, he abandoned the vessel, and putting himself into the hold of the stage-coach, came up to town; and thinking the horse would be quite fresh next day, his brother, for want of other amusement, had gone to act the part of groom and ride him up.

He was disappointed, for, as I learned later, he could only get the horse as far as Slough, where he housed the nag a second time; it was some days before the animal recovered from the effects of the hunt.

I am sorry to say my good resolution failed, for about a fortnight after I found my friend at my side again, bound for a meet of the Epping Hunt!

The only alteration I can see about the Surrey Stag-hounds (as they are now called) since they were the property of the Earl of Derby, is in the colour of the servants' coats, which have been changed from scarlet to green plush. The men, I think, are the same; at least, Jonathan Griffin is the same Jonathan Griffin who hunted hounds for Lord Derby.

These hounds, when the property of his Lordship, hunted Surrey for fifty years free of expense to all who liked to join them. At the close of the season before the last, his Lordship gave hounds, deer, and all to Griffin; and it was resolved by the sportsmen who live, and those who hunt, in Surrey, to keep them on by subscription; accordingly one was set on foot by Mr Richard Tattersall, and the hounds commenced operations under his direction, assisted, I believe, by Mr Maberly. When they began business their stock-in-trade consisted of four couples and a

half of deer, but I have heard that they killed one that season.

It is rather curious that the same thing should happen to a man at the beginning and at the end of a hunting season, at the very same place, and under the very same circumstances. I have related my misfortunes at Reigate last November when, going to Brighton and intending to hunt with Colonel Jolliffe, I found myself snowed up in the town; and I hope it will not detract from the credibility of my story when I state that the same thing occurred to me on the 1st of April, *alias* April Fool's Day.

You may recollect that the last few days of March were attended by most delightful weather —in fact, it was too hot for violent exercise, and summer clothes seemed more seasonable than hunting dress. The Surrey Stag-hounds were to meet at Reigate on the 1st of April, and having a *penchant* for the White Hart and its good ale, I sent a horse down and slept there myself on the night of the 31st of March. Well, when I awoke in the morning the ground was covered with snow again, and the sleet and hail were pelting against the windows most unmercifully! Now a foreigner travelling that road would doubtless have made a memorandum that "at Reigate, in Surrey, it always snows"; and, indeed, it seemed as if an evil genius attended me, and was determined that Reigate should not be a hunting quarter.

However, the storm had not been so violent as it was in November, and notwithstanding the snow and piercing cold, we turned out about noon; and the stag going straight over to Redhill (White Hill just then), and seeming inclined to keep below, I stopped and rode quietly up to Town, arriving almost benumbed with cold.

I afterwards met these hounds between Croydon and the "Summer's Arms," when I had a better opportunity of judging their merits.

Fox-hunting was over, and stag-hunting was drawing to a close; the day was beautiful, but notwithstanding there was one of the smallest fields I ever saw out with hounds, at least with a pack having the pretensions of stag-hounds. (By the way, there was one old gentleman who ought really to have known better than put on a red coat with trousers.) I was much pleased with two youths, Maberlys, I was told, in scarlet, booted and breeched, and I saw the one who rode a white horse take a gate in very good style.

However deficient the field might be in point of numbers, the foot-people who occupied the heights made ample amends. I never in my life saw a country so "raised" by hounds; the hallooing and shouting would have frightened old Nick himself. The turning out of the stag and the laying on of the hounds presented nothing new. The latter seemed more riotous than even stag-hounds are licensed to be; and at one time I thought they would have gone to Brighton, despite the efforts of the whippers-in to turn them.

Jonathan is a bruising rider; I saw him charge a broad brook, about two miles to the east of Redhill, it being all his horse could do to reach the opposite bank. No one attempted to follow. As a huntsman I have little to say about him: people say he is a good one, and I am very willing to admit it, though I think a sailor with a quick eye and good telescope, to make an observation of the course the stag was steering, who could lay the hounds on to the line, would make just as good a huntsman as stag-hounds require.

I must, however, observe that Jonathan will never allow a whipper-in to do his work, consequently his hounds are always riotous and the whippers-in always changing. I remember one who afterwards went to Mr Musters; he left the Derby solely because he could not agree with Jonathan about managing the hounds.

The only requisite I see for a huntsman to stag-hounds is to be a forward rider so as to get up when the stag has had enough of it and prevent the hounds killing him; and in riding Jonathan certainly is a proficient. As to making casts to recover the scent of an animal which is as visible as a windmill, it seems playing at hunting. Besides, the country in many parts of the neighbourhood of London is so populous that a telegraphic view-halloo may be kept up for miles.

"I don't wish to disparage the waler" of Jonathan, as the dealers say when they are going to run down one's horse, but I thought him d——d slow on the day under notice.

People who are acquainted with the country know that just opposite the "Summer's Arms" there is a very large hill with a wood on the top —the name I forget; those who know the country will recognise the place, and those who do not will be just as wise without knowing its name.

Well, the stag having surveyed the land below this hill, thought, I suppose, to take a bird's-eye view from the summit thereof; and accordingly, passing through a garden belonging to a young ladies' seminary, charged the hill and gained the covert, with the hounds on pretty good terms with him.

What possessed Jonathan, or what engagements he might have in the wood, I know not; but I know that on reaching the north side of the hill

near Colonel Jolliffe's gorse covert, I saw the stag legging it over the country at least a mile on the other side of the London road, with three couple of hounds on the scent, and I will be bound to say that they were two miles ahead before Jonathan left the covert with the tail hounds.

Well may people talk of going out with the stag-hounds for the sake of a gallop! I never saw such galloping for the sake of galloping before; and though half the field saw the stag—which had been making for Gatton—change his line and go towards King's Wood, they worked their horses by riding the same way he had gone, though they knew to a certainty the point for which he was making.

Altogether I quite agree with the foreigner who was out with Mr Sullivan that stag-hunting "is not very distinguished sport."

I remember that my expectations were mightily raised in my youth by the story of an antiquated piece of family furniture in the shape of an hereditary huntsman, who had descended, like an entrance-hall clock, from generation to generation.

> "So, when my heart with old affections burns,
> To the enchanted morn of life it turns,
> Muses o'er feelings fresher, purer still,
> And sweetly points remember'd scenes at will."

His Christian name (I do not think he had a surname) was Matthew, which, in deference to his great age, the servants had changed into Methusalem. He used to have some long-winded stories respecting the doings of the old squire and his hounds, and, of course, Matthew himself was generally the hero of the tale.

Often during the Christmas holidays, and indeed after I had left school, have I stolen from

the dining-room to the servants' hall to hear of his marvellous stories; there was one, particularly famous, which he only unkennelled on extraordinary occasions, or by particular desire.

About Christmas, when the punch had warmed the cockles of his heart, and he had obtained the silence to which he considered himself entitled, he would begin: "As how on one fine morn he was a-going away with the hounds just over a-back of Tommy Johnson's wood, where they all joined upon a drag; and di! he would fain see what it was; and faith they had not gone a mile afore he see'd such a thing loup out of the wood, which, faith, he was puzzled whether it was a calf, or a cuddy, or the divil himsel; howsomdever, the hounds seem mighty taken with him, and so looking at his watch, and seeing that he was gay early to meet the Squire, and that the hounds were running fair for the place, he clapped spurs to his famous horse Dainty Davey (the present Squire has no such horse in his stable), and di! . . ."

I cannot remember the rest of the story, for it always varied in proportion to the quantity of punch he had swallowed; but the pith of it was that they ran this cuddy through I do not know how many counties and killed him into the bargain; and when Matthew got him home, the Old Squire told him what it was, and, moreover, he got some for his dinner, which he expected would be a very great "luxtury," but was mightily disappointed; and the conclusion of the story was, "by my soul, I had rather eat a bit of good mutton ony day than your dommed black venison."

This old man lived to an immense age. I forget how old he was when he died, but his passion for hunting continued to the last. About two years before his death he was very ill indeed; in fact,

so ill that I believe his coffin was made, but he rallied and went out with a pack of fox-hounds; and nine months after his illness his old nurse, a woman about his own age, who had been hired to take care of him, came to swear a child to him, much to the astonishment and scandal of the neighbourhood. He was a hoar old fellow, and much respected.

His death was communicated to me very feelingly by an old deaf groom, who had long been one of his pot-and-pipe companions.

"Have you heard, sir," said he, with a tear in his eye, "that the old black mare and Matthew are dead?"

"Sic transit gloria mundi!"

NIM SOUTH.

Not Thin South, as the 'Age' newspaper facetiously calls me; I happen to be rather corpulent.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD BERKELEY.

STRICTURES ON THE LATE KING CONDEMNED—PROPOSAL TO GIVE CHARLES X. PACK AND COUNTRY IN ENGLAND—TILBURY'S TERMS FOR HIRING OUT HUNTERS—EXPENSES OF OWNING AND HIRING COMPARED—YOUNG GROOMS *v.* OLD—COST OF TOURING—ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HIRING—A CHARM OF FOX-HUNTING—EXCLUSIVENESS OF THE OLD BERKELEY HUNT—STRANGERS NOT WELCOMED—THE O.B.H. COUNTRY—A BAD DAY WITH THE O.B.H.—HOSTILE LAND-OWNERS.

ALLOW me, sir, to congratulate you and compliment the author on that very excellent memoir of his late Majesty.

While praising it I cannot forbear to advert, though more in sorrow than in anger, to the truly disgusting conduct of some of the public prints, particularly that of a newspaper whose extensive circulation unfortunately entitles it to a notice to which its political principles have no claim. Times were, ere these degenerate days, when the liberal *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* was allowed to draw a curtain over the failings of the dead. I will venture to affirm that to whatever political party he may adhere, there is no one within these realms, worthy the name of Englishman, but condemns—nay, abhors—the spirit which actuated such an exposure of the dead as appeared in the leading journal on the 15th day of July.

While on the subject of Kings—what a mess my poor friend Charles X. has made of his affairs!

I was much amused (when the late Revolution was at its height) to see the account to which my hunt with him was turned by a bookseller. The 'Sporting Magazine' was placed in the window open with the following notice: "Nim South's hunting with the King of France!" Poor Charles! I think he is more sinned against than sinning. However, I hope he will take care of the crown jewels, and if he comes back to England we must get him a country and a pack of fox-hounds, as riding is much more in his line than reigning; and we will get him a better huntsman than Polignac, at least one who knows the country better. From a monarch I turn to a subject, and that one myself.

A line from a farmer who has my hunters at grass, asking when I will have them taken up, reminds me of my promise to give reasons for recommending "wandering sportsmen" to follow the example of the German noblemen who were hunting at Brighton last season, and hire, instead of buying, their hunters. Mr Tilbury's mode of doing business will be best described by the following letter, which was an answer to one from a friend of mine, inquiring his terms for the hire of a hunter when the hirer kept the horse and paid all expenses; also his charge for two hunters and a groom, Mr Tilbury paying all expenses:—

"Sir,—I received your letter requesting to know the price of hiring hunters *by the month.*

"To the price of a hunter per month 12 gs., the Gentleman who hires the horse paying keep and all expenses.

"I will send you two good hunters with a

clean obliging servant, and every requisite for the horse, and pay all expenses, for 40 gs. for the two horses per month, with the servants' expenses included.

"If you should take any horses, I shall be most happy to give you the choice of a number of good ones, that you may select two you like. Your further orders will be carefully attended to by, sir, your obedient servant,

"JOHN TILBURY."

MOUNT STREET,
GROSVENOR SQUARE.

This letter, I think, will frighten the country gentlemen who have no idea of the expense of livery stables and such places, and who frequently return home from their day's hunting with the identical twopence halfpenny in their breeches pocket they had taken out to meet the day's disbursements, having (like soldiers with their swords on) taken advantage of their red coats and deviated from the high-road—not, of course, with any view of avoiding the toll, but merely to ascertain the state of the country and see if it was in good riding condition.

I confess that at first blush the money seems "quite a heap"; but, to arrive at a true opinion, and to ascertain the real advantages of this plan, we must consider the case of a sportsman travelling with his own horses and servant. As Mrs Somebody said in her cookery book, when giving a recipe, "first catch your hare," so the gentleman must first buy or get his horse somehow or other. I have never yet found any to be given away.

Supposing, then, that he purchases his hunters —say a couple, to make our case agree with Mr Tilbury's letter—at fairly reasonable prices, such,

in fact, as he will have no difficulty in getting again at the end of the season if he wishes to dispose of them; we will suppose that they both stand sound, and meet with no accidents during the season, also that the two will carry him on an average with fox-hounds and harriers five days a fortnight; still he is at very great expense in their keep.

The cheapest livery stable I ever had my hunters in cost me 24s. 6d. a week each horse for hay, corn and beans, though in general the latter are charged extra. Then comes a yard and a half of etceteras, such as mashes, carrots, gruel, nitre, oil, stopping, &c., amounting to at least 3s. a week more each horse; and every now and then hops in a long farrier and veterinary surgeon's bill for shoes, cordial, and alterative balls, bleeding, physicking, and humbugging, also a saddler for wear and tear of horse gear, to say nothing of Messrs Wilkinson & Kidd's annual bill for the appointments themselves; so what with these, the expenses of sending horses on to covert, gruel after hunting, ostler for giving them a "rub and a promise," and one thing and another, I do not think a man can calculate upon each hunter costing him less than £2 a week.

This, then, will bespeak about £16 and upwards of his ready money for the month (and in strange livery stables it must be *ready* too). But as yet we have got no one to look after them.

A friend of mine used to say that a good dressing was worth a feed of corn, and though grooms, like most other articles, are to be had at all prices (at the Horse Bazaar they tell me the grooms are ticketed with their terms, and instead of asking Jack or Tom what wages he expects, you catch him and look at his ticket), sooner than have a

bad one a man had better merely keep a tiger, or light man-boy, to ride his horses from one place to another, and trust entirely to the ostler and his own diligence. With a regular groom, a man might commit his horse entirely to his care; but no one worthy the name of sportsman would think of trusting them to the care of boys and oat-stealers.

For my own part, being passionately fond of horses, I would much rather have a country lad about fifteen or sixteen years old, than an obstinate, self-sufficient old mule of a groom, who, if he has not all his own way, gets as sulky as a bear with a sore head, and is never easy when you are in the stable. Besides, another advantage of keeping a lad is that you may lick him or lollop him as Matthews termed it when describing his trip to that land of liberty and freedom, America, "where every man has a right to lollop his own nigger."

This may be done with impunity in a strange land, where the tiger does not know where to find Sir Richard Birnie,[1] but it is a joke which had better be confined to the country, for the magistrates in town have a singular aversion to blows. Most men, however, have grown-up grooms. It has been my misfortune to have a few of them, and d——d lazy dogs they all were! I have generally paid from 25s. to 30s. shillings a week for the gentlemen when stationary and, I think, 7s. a day when travelling, which, of course, they all swore was too little. I suppose on an average a groom costs £6 a month.

Well, then, this £6 and the £16 for the horses' keep makes £22 a month.

These expenses are calculated on the supposi-

[1] A famous London police magistrate.

tion that the horses remain in one place the whole month; but the worst part of the story is, when they are travelling from one Hunt to another, a hatful of money will hardly satisfy the exorbitant demands of the innkeepers. Here is a specimen for you, a bill which my groom presented to me one day last season when travelling a horse from Brighton to London :—

Paid at the George Inn, Crawley.

The day of —— 1830.

1 Horses Hay	1	6
Mash, Corn, Benes	6	9
Greasing		
Ostler	1	0
	9	3

Nine shillings and threepence for one night! And a shilling to the oat-stealer for doing what my "man-groom" was paid for doing!

"Tempus fuggit—money flies, indeed," as the Duke's coachman said. I am not a stingy man, though I have every reason for being so; but it is always the case in the world, and those who have least money spend the most; and "it is not the money I minds; but I hates to be composed upon"—even for "benes."

And as there are a great many fox-hunters similarly situated, I intend in the course of my peregrinations to show up every slipshod, bloated, red-eyed, unshaven fellow called a publican (and generally worthy of the name of sinner) who shall presume to impose upon Nim South; so *prenez garde*, my jolly bonifaces!

To resume. This one bill will show how utterly impossible it is for a gentleman to calculate his

expenses when travelling, and is one of the greatest inducements for adopting Mr Tilbury's plan. Innkeepers know when the "gentleman" pays, and charge accordingly, while Mr Tilbury's groom goes into the yard and says that his master will only allow so much per night for each horse; and if the innkeeper will not receive them in on those terms, the horses must be taken elsewhere, while the hirer enters the hotel with the satisfaction of knowing that "come what will what may," he will only have to fork out his £42 at the end of every twenty-eight days.

We will now take another view of the subject.

There are few sportsmen (especially young ones, to whom this mode is particularly recommended) but lose very considerably in converting their horse-flesh into money; still fewer, either young or old, who do not happen some accident to their horses, which may deprive them of their services for a part or perhaps the whole of a season; and we have heard of such things as men killing their horses or, more properly speaking, for sportsmen are never cruel, of horses dying in consequence of over-exertion and want of condition. Now Tilbury's horses are always in good condition, and for the best possible reason—they have plenty of work and exercise, and great care is taken of them. If an animal goes amiss in any way it is immediately sent off to the farm at Pinner to recover. With respect to the other disagreeables—laming or killing—as they affect sport or the pocket, the hirer has nothing to do in the former case but return the horse and get another; and in the latter, to get another without returning the carcase.

Another advantage is that, all the horses being for sale at a certain price, the hirer, if particularly smitten with his mount, may make it his own



A. Cooper, R.A.

Thos. Oldaker.

by coming down with the pewter; and I think a something may fairly be set down to the score of experience gained by thus trafficking in horse-flesh without incurring the purchaser's risk, for notwithstanding some people buy their experience at a cheaper rate than others, I never heard of a "witch" in horse-flesh who got his knowledge entirely for nothing; and though we have heard of heaven-born huntsmen, the gods have not yet showered down any heaven-born horse-dealers.

In justice to Mr Tilbury, I must add that he fulfils his contracts most faithfully and creditably.

Many of his horses are of great value. The horses of the Old Berkeley Fox-hounds which the Oldakers used to ride (and since them their successors) were all excellent, and some of them brought good prices at Tattersall's when they came to be sold, though there was no demand for horses on the day they were put up.

I have recommended this system and pointed out its advantages, but I confess it presents one disadvantage: a man has none of that interest in looking after hired horses that he has in attending his own. If the poor animal has carried him well during the day, he does not sit down to dinner with half the satisfaction he would if the horse were his; and when he goes out between dinner and his wine to see him done up and made comfortable for the night, he very likely will content himself by feeling that he is all clean instead of staying to see the candles extinguished and the stable-door locked.

When billeted for hunting in a country town or village, I always spend an hour in the stable every evening, and sometimes have followed the same rule in large towns, and have been half-ruined in purchasing rose-water to get the smell

of the stable out of my garments, lest the mistress of the house ring the bell and desire her John to look if there is not a dog in the room; and the "powdered puppy," after searching every hole and corner, should at length wind me.

This is the only objection I have to Mr Tilbury's system; but it will be no obstacle in the way of people who do not take an interest in their horses. At the finish of the season or period for which the horses were engaged, the hirer will rid himself of a useless and expensive establishment at a day's notice without having exceeded his intended expenses by one farthing.

Yet stay! I think we must say something about the risk of a frost, when the hirer may never have the felicity of seeing his nags without their clothing.

I had intended in this letter to make play among the fox-hounds in the neighbourhood of London, commencing with the admirable establishment of Colonel Jolliffe at Merstham; but really, like the blind beggar's days, my paper is dwindled to the shortest span. I cannot enter upon the merits of a pack on which my heart is placed at such an advanced hour in the night, as the M.P.'s say. In my next I hope to do ample justice to the subject, beginning with the Master of the Hounds, and ending with Yorkshire Jack, the whip.

To eke out my paper I will notice another pack of fox-hounds, whose name I have already mentioned.

A great pleasure in fox-hunting consists in the good feeling which exists among the members of the Hunt; divest it of this, and it loses its chief attraction. In visiting the different establishments, a stranger's pleasure consists in observing the breed, &c., of the hounds, the style of manage-

ment, and in those interchanges of civility which one sportsman delights to show another. The reason for these remarks is my experience with the Old Berkeley Fox-hounds, the only pack hunting with which I look back with regret. Though of old establishment this Hunt appears to exist more in tradition than in reality; not only is there no advertisement of their meets, no member dare tell a friend where to find them.

Is it the fault of the Master or that of the subscribers? It is apparent that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark.

No, it is the fault of neither one nor the other, but that of the landowners, who, with the great Earl of S. X. at their head, set their faces one and all against hunting. It was at the instigation of this nobleman that the famous lawsuit (one of the tales of this pack) was brought, whereby the old-established principle "that a sportsman has a right to follow his game on the land of another" was contravened by Lord Ellenborough. Moreover, the land is in the hands of so many small proprietors, that it is next to an impossibility to gain the goodwill of all.

Looking at the whole establishment—Master, servants, horses, hounds, and field,—few, if any, more efficient will be found in the kingdom. Mr Combe is a gentleman and a sportsman; the Oldakers, as servants, were not to be surpassed; the horses, I have already said, were excellent, the hounds business-like, and the fields composed of acknowledged sportsmen. You will observe that I speak in the past tense, for really I do not know whether Mr Combe intends going on with them next season or not.

The kennel is situated at the pleasant village of Rickmansworth, at the extreme west of the

county of Hertford. They hunt in four different counties—viz., Berks., Herts., Middlesex, and Oxford,—to which, I suppose, may be added the cities of London and Westminster. I never hunted with them but once, and then we met at the kennel. I had been dining with an old member of the Hunt, and hearing the meet, we agreed to take a peep at them on the following day. Sending our horses on to Pinner, a very convenient place for these hounds, we set off early in the morning, Rickmansworth being some twenty miles from Cumberland Gate.

The whole line of country past Harrow is beautiful, all grass-land, but rather too much enclosed. Nearer Rickmansworth, while the fields become larger, the fencing is less formidable, and without exception it is the best hunting country within the neighbourhood of London; it has another advantage in being thinly populated.

The hounds are a sporting-looking pack; greater attention has evidently been paid to their shape than their colour, for many of them are rather dingy. The servants, too, are proper sort of fellows, looking for all the world as though they came out of a mustard-pot, their livery being bright yellow plush frock-coats, leather breeches, and black caps. The hunt-coat is, or was, scarlet with a yellow collar, but I did not observe any one with it, not even Mr Baitch, who, with two horses, hunts every day they go out. The yellow collar being somewhat conspicuous, it is said that in days of yore members arriving in hostile country used to turn it up about their ears, thereby disguising at once their faces, and the Hunt to which they belonged.

Of the performers in the Hunt, of course, I can know little or nothing. No one, however, can

overlook Mr Simeon Howard, who is a good sportsman and a pleasant companion—no despicable character to meet in any country, particularly in one like the Old Berkeley, where every man looks as if he thought a stranger had intentions upon his watch or his purse. I would sooner be Mr Simeon than his horse, for he is much nearer twenty stone than ten. Mr Edmond Tattersall, from the manner I have seen him ride with other hounds, is, I should think, one of their topping men.

The day I was with them there was no run worth speaking of; in fact, I wondered that hounds could run at all, with such parched ground and poor scent.

I may observe that in a country where the size of the field is a matter of moment, it would show a little consideration to the Master of the Hounds if certain noblemen and gentlemen could dispense with the attendance of their grooms. Any gentleman in the field, I am sure, would be happy to pick them up when they fell from their horses, which seems the only use to which his master can put a groom riding after him.

My day's hunting with these hounds, while it convinced me that the country, at least where we were, was decidedly hostile, also showed me that the style in which the Hunt is managed is far from pleasant. The members appear to regard strangers as intruders, and there is constant inquiry going on as to who brought such a person out, and whose friend that other is, and how a third unfortunate, who appears to have neither friend nor acquaintance, could have found out where they were going to meet. What with this and the hostility of the land proprietors, it is converted into a species of warfare instead of sport.

This is a pity; but how is it to be remedied? They must either go on as they have hitherto done (for the country can never be hunted openly), or else convert the hounds into a private pack, with which none but the Master's friends may hunt. Some difficulty might arise in consequence of their being the property of the county; but sooner than leave so good a country, were I the present Master I would endeavour to convert them into "Combe's Entire," [1] and if he follows my advice, and will allow me a day or two's hunting with them every year, he may rely upon it that none but his entire shall ever find its way down the throat of his and your obedient servant, Nim South.

[1] Mr Combe is head of the great firm of Combe, Delafield & Co., porter brewers.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLONEL JOLLIFFE'S.

CROYDON THE LONDONERS' HUNTING CENTRE—HOUNDS ACCESSIBLE THEREFROM—COLONEL JOLLIFFE'S—ROFFEY, THE HUNTSMAN—YORKSHIRE JACK, WHIPPER-IN—ROFFEY'S COTTAGE—THE MERSTHAM KENNELS—THE MERSTHAM HOUNDS—THEIR EXCELLENCE—DEFECTS OF THE COUNTRY—A DAY WITH COLONEL JOLLIFFE'S—GOOD HOUND WORK—A FAST TWENTY MINUTES—A KILL IN COVERT—BUGLE PREFERABLE TO HORN—SECOND FOX LOST—MR PAGDEN, A MODEL SUPPORTER—"THEM DOMMED STINKING FLOWERS"—ROFFEY'S ANTIPATHY TO HUNTING CORRESPONDENTS—A GRUELLING FOR NIMROD—FRENCH FOXES IMPORTED—JOHN TESHFIELD'S OFFER OF FRENCH FOXES—RUMOURED RETIREMENT OF COLONEL JOLLIFFE.

CROYDON is the Melton of London; from Westminster Bridge, going by Streatham, is about ten miles. It is the central point for several packs of all sorts: Colonel Jolliffe's, the Union, the Old Surrey, the Surrey Stag-hounds, the Sanderstead, and Mr Meager's Harriers are all within reach. There are also excellent hunting stables—Morton's, M'Carthy's, Bignall's, &c., particularly the first, where one finds roomy loose-boxes and moderate terms. A mile or two below Croydon, in Smitham Bottom, is Mr Pearce's, but he has so many horses of his own that he has not often stalls to spare.

There is no place like it for a man who hunts entirely in Kent or Surrey; the best plan is to

keep one's hunters there, and start with the horse fresh from his own stable in the morning, returning to it after his day's work. This is a much better plan than sending on the hunter overnight to a strange stable, and perhaps leaving him there after hunting. Further, it is a fact that keeping a horse and groom one night in a strange livery stable or an inn will cost about half the week's keep of a horse in his own stable.

Of the fox-hounds in the neighbourhood of town, there is no establishment I like better than Colonel (or now, I believe, Mr) Jolliffe's. Lord Petre's in Essex is doubtless a better set-out, at least more business-like, and his hounds are exactly to my taste; but for a real thorough-paced varmint turn-out, commend me to Merstham. True it is that both Master and men are somewhat in the afternoon of life; but then the hounds are young, and it is the hounds that catch the fox. The Colonel is one of the old school, and a very fine example of it.

Who has not seen him walk up St James' Street, his venerable white head covered with a huge punt hat, a white neck-cloth, neat blue coat with metal buttons, light vest, and clean yellow leather shorts with long gaiters? He looks the country gentleman he is, and a fox-hunter. In the former capacity no man is better liked or more respected in his own neighbourhood, and he is the very idol of his tenantry. As a fox-hunter he has served three or four apprenticeships, and is known the world over. When a younger man, he must have been what we should call a "devilish good-looking fellow," and though now weighing above sixteen stone, retains most of his good looks.

Old Roffey, the huntsman, is the boy for my money, however; he stands about six feet high,

and out of compliment to his master, I suppose, only turns the scale at fifteen stone. For nearly thirty years has Surrey had the benefit of his talents in the capacities of whip and huntsman; the latter situation he has filled for about half his service.

Like his master, Roffey is no chicken, but they are both outstripped in years by Yorkshire Jack, the whipper-in. I do not know why Jack has not risen in his profession, for he is a good active fellow and has been with some good packs, among the number, I rather think, the Duke of Rutland's. He came into Surrey about four seasons ago from the Holderness, and I do not think the Cleveland Hills will ever see Jack's pretty face again. I was amused one day, calling at the kennel when Roffey happened to be out, on asking for Jack, an old woman I took to be his wife called "father!"

Roffey is a famous covert huntsman; I never saw a better. He has an excellent musical voice, in strength equalled only by the Colonel's. His weight is against him; on horseback he shows more "the parts of a man than the man of parts." However, with a second horse, which he knows well where to plant, he is always there or thereabouts. He has a very intelligent countenance, a fine, clear, shrewd eye, and such a mouth for a tart!

He and his wife, and Jack and his wife, have hunting-boxes facing the road, and in front of the kennel. Roffey's is very snug, and is worthy of a visit. The very walls represent the chase, though unfortunately the paper-stainer has not given great variety to his subject. Roffey has done his best to remedy this by scattering pictures of the Colonel, foxes' heads, brushes, &c., upon the walls and about the room. On either side of the fireplace are easy-chairs, in which, I suppose,

Roffey and Jack, or the companion of the evening, settle the affairs of the foxes.

The house and kennel are situate at the entrance to the village of Merstham, about seven or eight miles below Croydon, on the Brighton road by Redhill. It is a neat pretty village, and the church very much resembles that in the print of Tom Moody going to earth, whom my friend War Whoop (I suppose I must not call him my "Cockneyshire" friend any more, as he is going to purchase a hunting whip) seems ambitious of following.

The only fault of the kennel is that it is too near the high-road. The arrangements are good, and there is running water in all the yards. At the back is a clump of trees on a gentle eminence, one end of which extends into the adjoining field, where on a summer's day Roffey may be seen standing with his hounds, happy as a king surrounded by his courtiers.

The original Merstham pack was bought in the beginning of the present century at Messrs Tattersall's of Mr Bowes, and it now comprises blood from almost all the best kennels in England, amongst them those of the Dukes of Beaufort, Rutland, and Bedford; Lords Fitzwilliam, Yarborough, Vernon, Derby, Lowther, Middleton, Sefton, and Althorp; Sir T. Mostyn, Mr Warde, Mr Meynell, Mr Hanbury, Mr Corbet, Mr Smith, Mr Newnham, Mr Osbaldeston, Mr Chute, and the Old Berkeley.

At present the pack consists of about 36 couples, including the entry for the next season, and 36 couple of neater hounds in shape, size, and colour will not often be seen. The numbers were reduced at the close of last season, and the draft was purchased by Lord Elcho for the Duke of Buc-

cleuch, out of which, I am informed, His Grace drafted some of the best, because they were not quite so sightly as he likes them. There are some very fine hounds in the entry for this season, and many of them are blessed with uncommonly funny names. Shakerty and Shaffington, brothers, are both fine hounds, though the former, from his immense size, is better suited to the Raby pack than any other known to me. Rubicon is what Roffey terms a "managing dog"—I suppose the sort of gentleman who takes good care of number one, in consequence of which he drew down upon his devoted carcase the indignation of the kennel, and they very nearly worried him. An aristocratic stallion hound called Tinderbox traces his pedigree back to Mr Meynell's famed Guzman, which, with Lord Yarborough's Ranter, have sent their progeny into half the kennels in England.

Looking at these hounds, either for use or ornament, I do not know where symmetry and beauty of colour will be found so happily combined; there is scarcely a hound in the pack that is not a perfect picture. As to speed, they are fast enough in all conscience. I remember overhearing an excellent discourse in Tattersall's yard last spring between Roffey and Arber (from Colonel Wyndham's) respecting the comparative merits of the packs, when Roffey ably advocated the old system of hunting in preference to racing, and concluded his argument by saying he understood that Colonel Wyndham's were the most "fleetsomest things vot is."

Though there are many much better countries than Colonel Jolliffe's, still there are many infinitely worse. It is certainly better than Sussex, either on Colonel Wyndham's or Mr Craven's side,

and the fences are by no means so stiff as those in the latter gentleman's country. The part above the kennel is too near London, and too much disturbed by other hounds, to afford much sport; but "below the hills," to use the local expression, no man will have much cause of complaint.

I may here suggest to the managers of the Surrey Stag-hounds, and I do it with all respect, the propriety of arranging their days so as not to interfere with the fox-hounds. This may be done either by hunting on different days, or making their appointments as far as possible from the fixtures of the fox-hounds.

Well do I remember the day I first made my obeisance to these hounds. We met at Kingswood Gate, two miles north of Reigate, and, of course, "above hills." I had ridden up from Brighton the preceding day, having sent the horse I intended to hunt on to Crawley the day before, so that it had only ten miles to carry me.

It was early in March, and one of those delightful days—all fox-hunters know them—when one feels unusually elated and confident of sport. About eleven o'clock up jogged Roffey and Jack, with two or three-and-twenty couple of as handsome healthy-looking hounds as ever I saw; they were also attended by two servants, one a sort of second whip riding Roffey's second horse, the other a groom belonging to Mr Wm. Jolliffe. Roffey, as I said before, is a *great* man, and he was mounted on a great chestnut mare, with a white ratch down her face. From beneath the sides of his black velvet cap projected his bushy white hair; instead of a scarlet coat, he was attired in dark blue plush, lined with yellow, having a fox's head on a gilt button, yellow breeches, &c., and he sported the old-fashioned stirrup-leather round



Dean Wolstenholme, sen.

Roffey and Whipper-in, with Colonel Jolliffe's Hounds, near Merstham Church.

From the picture at Ammerdown. By permission of Lord Hylton.

his horse's neck. I never saw a more complete picture of a huntsman of the old school. The similarity was not a little heightened by the attendance of Jack similarly attired, the blue coat being the livery of the Hunt servants.

It was a Monday, and the field was small, consisting perhaps of twenty horsemen. On arriving at a gorse covert in a field on the left of the road going to London, a short halt was made for the Colonel, who soon came up, his punt-hat covered with an oilskin. I was surprised to find he was not such a natty man in his field appointments as he is in his home dress, and I would rather have had Roffey's "smalls" (larges rather) than his.

Roffey, I ought to say, has his hounds in admirable order. Though they ranged themselves along one side of the covert like a regiment of soldiers, not one attempted to enter, until with a wave of his mutton fist and a "Hie in! hie in! Yoick!" he gave them permission; then in they dashed. There was no creeping about to avoid the pricks or skulking out again or lying down. No, no! There was Roffey and there was Jack looking on, and there were the hounds doing their work. Master Reynard not having returned from his Sunday night's debauch in a neighbouring hen-roost, we left the gorse and went about a mile south to a wood, part of the timber in which had been felled, leaving, however, some very nice underwood.

"Follow me," said the Colonel; "you shall see them find their fox." Accordingly I did, notwithstanding the danger I ran of stumping my horse.

There for the first time Roffey opened out his musical stores, and as a covert huntsman I think

he stands unequalled. His voice is rich and powerful beyond description; and oh, ye gods! when the hounds began to wind their fox, how melodious and enthusiastic he was!

"Hark to Charleville! Hark to Charleville! Yoick, Singleton, yoick!"

Then from the covert side Jack's tally-ho—

"Hark, halloo! Hark, halloo! Forward! Forward! Forward!" and away scampered Roffey, sounding his bugle to get his hounds out of covert. I never heard a finer crash—all together, and big Roffey on his big mare in the middle of them.

The fox seemed inclined to keep on the hills, and ran for about two miles until a shepherd's dog headed him and he turned suddenly down a very steep part, but, luckily for the horsemen, over ploughed land. The field, not large at first, now became more select, and about half the number remained on the hill, either not liking the descent, or calculating upon the fox's return. The Colonel, Roffey, Sir Wm. Jolliffe, Mr Gilbert Jolliffe, Mr Pagden, and myself were, I think, the only ones who followed, and a rare scurry we had for about twenty minutes without a check. The country below hills was very heavy, and it seemed as if the fox owed Roffey a grudge, and was determined to plant him if possible.

"Haud up, old mere!" said Roffey, as at the end of fifteen minutes she rolled over with him into a ditch. "D——n, but I wish I had my other mere here," added he, casting his eyes, as I thought, up to heaven. "Tally-ho! tally-ho!" from the top of the hill proclaimed a retreat, and then came the tug-of-war.

Our horses, as you may suppose, were somewhat beat, and now, by way of a breather, they had the great hill to climb. About half-way up I threw

myself off to lead, and looking back, saw Roffey grasping the old mare by the mane, grinning most ludicrously, and running his spurs into her flanks.

Thought I, "Old cock, you had better save the little go you have left in her for the levels," and before I gained the summit I fully reckoned upon hearing

> "The tall, plump, brawny youth
> Cursing his cumbrous bulk
> And envying now
> The short pygmean race he whilom kenn'd
> With proud insulting leer."

But no! By the powers! he gained the top of the hill, and I found the object of his wishes, "the other old mere," stationed there in charge of the second whip. Roffey speedily dismounted him, and as he threw his huge limb across her back, he turned round to me and said, "Oy, now this is foine, you see," and away he galloped, leaving me and my horse puffing as if we were both broken-winded.

I saw Colonel Jolliffe crossing a field a little way off on the same grey with which he started, so I made after him, and came up by a covert side in which the hounds were running beautifully, every one being on the scent.

"Now," said the Colonel, "he will break from this end"; and sure enough he made for it, with every appearance of determination; and doubtless would have done so had not a great open-mouthed chaw-bacon who would have scared an elephant been standing fair in the way. The fellow was as obstinate as a mule, and neither fair words nor foul could induce him to hide his ugly face behind a hedge. The hounds gained upon their fox, and a momentary check ensued—all was

silent. I heard the leading hound crush his backbone, and immediately followed Roffey's war-whoop. He was a beautiful fox, and I thought as he came out of the covert on Roffey's back he was the finest I had ever seen. Roffey's bugle and voice soon brought all the hounds into the grass field, when, after a flourish of the former, the fox was disposed of in the usual manner.

I admired Roffey's bugle, and wonder it is not more generally used; it is much better and more musical than those mail-coach things one generally sees stuck into the saddle.

The bucks who had remained on the hill, of course, were not contented with the day's sport; and though, as is frequently the case at this season of the year, the weather had changed for the worse, we drew for another fox. Our second showed me that the hounds are as good under adversity as they are in prosperity; and after the excellent half-hour's burst we had enjoyed, I saw them run another for double that time, with as cold and bad a scent as hounds could well acknowledge. He, however, escaped, the woods at Upper Gratton harbouring him for that night at least.

In my last I mentioned the subject of the Old Berkeley Fox-hounds, more particularly with reference to the style of management.

Colonel Jolliffe's, I am happy to say, are a complete contrast. Nothing can be kinder or more polite either to friend or stranger than the Master. The subscribers take their cue from him, and I have no hesitation in pronouncing them "jolly companions every one."

As riders across country few equal Mr William or Mr Gilbert Jolliffe, Mr Claggett, or Mr Pagden. The last-named gentleman is just the sort of man

every Master of Hounds ought to have among his subscribers; one who does not content himself with sport with the hounds during the season and leaving them to take care of themselves during the summer, but delights to be among them all the year round. I will be bound for it that Mr Pagden knows the qualities and pedigree of every hound in the pack as well as either Colonel Jolliffe, Roffey, or Jack.

I have already mentioned the scarcity of foxes in the northern part of the country. Nor is it to be wondered at, considering the short distance it is from the "village." It is rather mortifying to ride 15 or 20 miles to covert for the pleasure of a blank day; however, misfortunes will happen. Before to-day I have found myself half-way to Brighton with them, the dial pointing to four, and yet no find.

The last day I had with Colonel Jolliffe's was just at the close of the season, and the ground was very dry. We found near Bockland, and had to run our fox a few miles to a place called Leigh, when all at once, on a bankside covered with primroses and violets, up went their noses.

"Bad scent I fear, Roffey," I said.

"Oh, the scent's good enough," said he, "if 'twere not for these dommed stinking flowers."

I do not know why, but Roffey has a great objection to what he calls beuik (book) men. I fancy I see him when he reads this and exclaims, "Why, d——n it, here's another beuik man!"

He let the cat out of the bag, telling me he made "a set" at Nimrod when he saw him out one day.

"We met at Povey Cross," said he, "and just as we were going into covert, sum'un com riding up and whispered in my ear, 'I say, Roffey,

that's beuik man.' 'So,' says I to my whop, 'I say, Jack, we munnot let beuik man beat us to-day, or, dang it, he'll write it all down.' So old Jack stuck tight to him, and we gave beuik man such a routing o'er country I doesn't think he'll ever forget it."

I hope he'll show mercy unto me; at any rate, that he and Jack will not attack me at the same time.

A few seasons ago Colonel Jolliffe tried the experiment of turning down foxes where they were most wanted, and sent a man with a few couple of hounds over to France to get them. Mr Crothall, who now keeps the Paris Hotel at Dover, then kept an inn at Boulogne, and assisted in taking them. It was rather an expensive embassy, for they only got some six brace, but those were good ones. Being turned down while the corn was yet on the ground, they were sheltered during the time they studied the geography of the country, and all showed good sport.

A propos de bottes, in consequence of your Parisian correspondent's letter, I wrote to his friend Squire Jenkins about some foxes, expecting to get them for half nothing, and received the following answer:—

"Sir,—I have seven fine foxes, or at least cubs, very strong; if you like to have them at ten shillings per head, and you pay the expense from Boulogne, I shall forward them one morning, and they will be with you the next.

"You know by the time of year they are near the size of old ones, and a deal fresher, and more likely to stay on the hunt and learn the course of the country.

"These will be all we shall have until the

latter end of October, for they are all out of the ground until the cold weather.

"Sir, please to direct John Teshfield, Boar's Head, Rue de Cassernes, Boulogne-sur-Mer."

There's a letter for you, from a publican and a foxite, transcribed *verbatim*, I assure you!

Rumours are abroad (I sincerely hope without foundation) that Colonel Jolliffe has retired from the management of these hounds.

In saying this I mean no disrespect to the new "King William," who, like his brother, is a keen sportsman; but the fact is one has been so long accustomed to hear of Colonel Jolliffe's hounds that it will not be possible to fancy them the same veteran corps under the management of another. Besides, the red coat must not give precedence to the black; and Mr William Jolliffe's hat, though I daresay very steady in water, will not punt [1] a sportsman over a flooded river in anything like so short a time as the Colonel's.

Joking apart, I hope Colonel Jolliffe will reconsider the subject before he declines the chase. Let him remain where he is, a Master of Foxhounds in the county of Surrey, and leave the representation of it

> "And all meaner things
> To vain ambition and the pride of Kings."

He may rely upon this—that as M.P. for the country of Surrey, he cannot command a greater share of the goodwill and esteem of the inhabitants than he now enjoys as M.F.H. of the Merstham.

[1] A Merstham Hunt jest which I must explain: one day in a sharpish run, the field were stopped at some brook which the rains had swollen, and in debating how they should get over, Mr —— humorously observed, "Oh, where is Jolliffe? he will punt three or four of us over in his hat."

CHAPTER IX.

A VISIT TO LEICESTER: AND VARIOUS MATTERS.

LORD SOUTHAMPTON'S MOVE FROM QUORNDON TO LEICESTER—HIS NEW KENNEL DESCRIBED—CONVERSION OF THE HORSE-BAZAAR—HOT STABLES—LORD SOUTHAMPTON'S WEIGHT-CARRIERS—A PREVENTIVE OF CRIB-BITING—SOME OF THE HUNTERS—THE SIGN OF THE "EARL HOWE'S ARMS"—THE HOUNDS—STABLES AND ROOMS TAKEN FOR THE SEASON—SHORTAGE OF STABLING IN LEICESTER—A BREAKFAST AT THE WHITE HART—AN ARRESTING PICTURE—A DISAPPOINTMENT—SIR JOHN GERRARD'S FOIBLE—A FOUNDERED HACK—OBSERVATIONS OF BAG-FOX HUNTING—THE EVIL PARTLY CAUSED BY SECRET FIXTURES—NOTICE TO THE N.S.U. OF INTENDED VISIT—REPLY TO THE OLD FOX-HUNTER'S "WORD ON THE O.B.H."—A WORD TO THE LONDONERS IN THE HUNT—ANSWER TO THE "OLD SUBSCRIBER'S HINT TO SPORTSMEN"—LORD SOUTHAMPTON'S NEW KENNEL AND THE METHODIST CHAPEL—HIS CARAVAN FOR HOUNDS—SURREY FIXTURES DISPLAYED AT TATTERSALL'S.

HERE I am at Leicester in the heart of Leicestershire. All the saddlers, livery-stable keepers, housekeepers, and other keepers are expecting to make a fortune by the migration of Lord Southampton from Quorndon Hall to this ancient and independent borough; one and all, from the corn merchant to the pastry-cook, are on the tiptoe of expectation.

Things look well indeed. His Lordship has purchased, or taken, a large house in Humberstone Gate, to which he is making various additions. In a field to the back, just on the outskirts of the

town, the new kennel is nearly completed, and will be ready for the hounds in a fortnight or so. It may be thought rather too near the town, but that is the only fault possible to find. Designed on a good plan, and built, as is always the case in Leicestershire, of brick with a blue slate roof, no expense has been spared. The kennel has four yards, 37 feet by 20, one to each lodging-house. Three of the lodging-houses are 13 feet by 15, and the third is 16 feet by 15. At the end of these comes a washing-house 20 feet by 15, a feeding-house 16 feet by 15, a boiling-house the same size as the latter, and a cooling-house 12 feet by 15 feet. There is a fifth lodging-house for bitches, &c., projecting from the rest with its own yard, 24 feet by 10 feet. All the rooms are 9 feet high, and above the principal lodging-houses there are servants' quarters.

His Lordship would have had to build stables as well as kennels, but he has been spared this expense, thanks to some wiseacre who took it into his head to build a bazaar here a few years back for the sale of horses, *à la mode de* Tattersall. Of course, the scheme did not answer, and the place was closed. Lord Southampton took the building, and after knocking in sundry partitions and making divers doors, he has succeeded in licking it into the shape of a stable. It was an ill-contrived place; there was a long line of loose-boxes hardly large enough for ponies. The stalls have been removed, and some famous large boxes made for his Lordship's own hunters. Going through the stables, I was surprised at the intense heat, and asked the groom if they were not too hot. I received the usual answer that they were "always kept at that temperature." Now, if it was too hot for me, it certainly must

have been so for the horses, which, further, had on as many clothes as would thaw an iceberg, notwithstanding the day was anything but cold. The number usually kept for the Hunt is about forty, fifteen or sixteen of which Lord Southampton reserves for his own use. Riding fifteen or sixteen stone, he requires powerful horses, and his is certainly as fine a stud as any in England.

There is a grey gelding (Fugleman, I think, is his name), a splendid thoroughbred, with immense bone and substance; it is a thousand pities he was not kept as a stallion. He stands above 17 hands. Another grey, an older horse, called Trumpeter, pleased me most. He is fired on all four legs, and was a crib-biter, but, thanks to one of Mr Yare's anti-crib-biters, he has been obliged to leave off the trick.

The groom spoke very highly of this invention, and said he had no doubt but it would prevent wind-sucking also; but on this point he did not speak from experience, and I confess to doubts on the point, for crib-biting and wind-sucking seem distinct habits; two bars across his mouth do not prevent the horse from drawing breath between them.

Let us return to Lord Southampton's stud. There is a black horse called Duke, which, I understand, is a favourite—a very likely-looking animal to cross a country with; also a 5-year-old bay, bought last season, which promises well though at present rather poor. All the servants' horses are not yet come, a dozen of them being still at Quorndon. Those I saw are superior, though, of course, not weight-carriers like his Lordship's. There is a powerful chestnut called Surprise, which Mumford, the huntsman, rides. All are good; indeed, were Lord Southampton to say, "Nim

South, go into my stable and choose a horse," I would take the first I came to, for I am sure I could not go wrong.

The stud-groom has a good berth of it, I should think; he occupies a house almost the size of his master's, at the entrance to the bazaar. He has some sixteen grooms and helpers under him. Besides the bazaar, where there is stabling for thirty-four horses, his Lordship has taken five stalls at Bell's, the livery-stable keeper; added to which he has stabling at his own house for carriage horses, hacks, &c. Hay and corn here are cheap—the people say cheaper than at Melton; be that as it may, what I have seen is very good.

Riding through the streets the other day, I was amused at the sign of an inn, the "Earl Howe's Arms," full size, with the noble motto, "Let Curzon hold what Curzon held," underneath which was written, "Hay and straw for cattle." Oh, what a falling-off is there, my countrymen!

Lord Southampton's hounds are at present kennelled at Mount Pleasant, about a mile south of Loughborough. The building was originally the barn belonging to a farmhouse, but it is intended to keep the young hounds there for the future.

They began cub-hunting about a month ago, and had killed eight or nine brace by the 7th of this month. The entry consists of 25 couple of very fine hounds. There is one called Rampant, with as handsome a head as ever I saw on a hound; indeed, his fore-quarters are perfect, but he falls off sadly behind. His brother Remus altogether is better shaped. Rocket is a fine hound, so are Gaiety and Hero, bred by the Duke of Rutland; and Ravager and Rasselas, got by Mr Osbaldeston's Rasselas. Hannibal and Highflyer,

brothers, both stallion hounds, are perfect; and Jingle and Jordon are pretty bitches, particularly the former, whose head reminded me of the prettiest bitch I ever saw—viz., Mr Conyer's Pastime. They are going to cub-hunt in the Harborough country in a few days, and will commence regular hunting on the first Monday in November.

They hunt five days a week, which with seventy-eight couple of hounds, and two- or three-and-twenty couple out a day, is sharpish work.

Though they avowedly hunt the dogs and bitches separately, two or three couple of the largest bitches are taken out with the dogs, and two or three couple of the smallest dogs with the bitches.

At Melton most of the stables are taken, and Sir Harry Goodricke's horses were expected there on the 8th. Lord Kinnaird's, for which twenty stalls are engaged, were also shortly to arrive. Count Hahn has also taken stabling.

At the George the best rooms are taken, as is the case at the Bell and Swan and White Lion. Lord Wilton is enlarging his house, and building stables also. I attempted to inspect the alterations in the former, but was so beset by Irish labourers demanding drink-money, that I was obliged to retreat.

The Leicester people flatter themselves that they will now annihilate Melton, and talk of their superior market and accommodation for visitors; they forget the great lack of stabling in the town.

To be sure, this want might very soon be supplied; but there does not seem to be in the place a man with the pluck of a mouse except Mr Morgan, late stud-groom to Lord Chesterfield, and I doubt he's letting the golden opportunity slip. Stalls have not risen in price, and are letting at the

usual 2s. 6d. a week. If there were plenty of good stabling and inns, Leicester certainly has advantages over Melton; but really, notwithstanding the immense number of the latter that there are, this and the Bell are the only good ones in the place.

The walls of the sitting-room at the White Hart, into which I was ushered, were adorned with two pictures, one of Daniel Lambert, the other of the Fat Yorkshire Hog, which I flattered myself symbolised the manner in which guests were treated. I was shocked in the morning, when I came down to breakfast, to find a tea-tray on a table covered with a piece of a man-of-war's mainsail, and divers thick slices of bread and butter placed on a plate like slates on a roof; and when I ordered some of the fat Yorkshire hog to be fried (expecting at all events to get that good), a piece of gristle with a little bacon attached was set before me. My feelings were those of Beau Brummel when the cook at Calais sent up what he called a mutton chop, but which more resembled a piece of a dying gladiator. Appearances are very deceptive, said I to myself as I paid the bill, and cast an eye on Daniel Lambert.

The people of this house are picture-fanciers. There hangs on the first landing of the stairs one painting of a Hunt which always arrests my attention as I pass to my bedroom. It represents a pack in full cry, with some ten or a dozen "out and outers" following; the foremost of these is right among the tail hounds; and not less pleasing are the horses, a chestnut and a white, third and seventh in the chase, for their backs are a mile and a half long, roomy enough to carry a whole parish. The artist guilty of thus caricaturing a noble animal has had the courage to place his

name in one corner of the production. I have a great mind to tell it.

I rode over to Enderby in the hope of seeing Mr Loraine Smith's harriers, but, much to my disappointment, they were out. I heard that Sir John Gerrard is expected at Kirkby within a week or ten days; of course, his arrangements as to hunting are as yet unknown.

The hounds at present are at Witherley, near Atherstone, the Warwickshire kennel. Lord Anson, it is supposed, will not hunt this season; and Sir John is to make some further arrangement at the close about keeping the hounds on. He is a new man in the field, at least as Master of Hounds. It is a bold step for a young man, and I wish him all the success so laudable an undertaking deserves. He was rather finical at one time, and used to match his hunters like carriage horses, always having two of the same colour in the field; but we all have our little foibles, and if this be his hobby, it is at all events an innocent one.

Cover hacks being always in request at hunting quarters, I recommend such gentlemen as do not wish to break their necks and die like bagmen on the road, to patronise Baker, late of the 12th Lancers ("Landseers" he calls them), who has some very good ones. I mention this because I was infamously used by another livery-stable keeper, who put me on a foundered horse. When I said how exceedingly dangerous it was, they very coolly told me that the animal certainly *might* have broken my neck, but they were going to part with it.

Ere I enter on a new season, allow me to make some few observations upon those events which have occurred, and replies to those remarks which

were made, during the course, or since the close, of the last one.

An able and manly letter, signed "A Supporter of British Sports," on the subject of bag-fox-hunting, solicits attention. Let it not be supposed from anything that I have already written, or am about to write, that I am an advocate for so unsportsmanlike a practice as hunting bag-foxes. The scarcity of foxes in the countries in the immediate neighbourhood of London will hardly excite surprise—nay, so far from their absence being matter of astonishment, to me the wonder is that any escape the purloiner, finding, as they do, a ready and a safe market.

Deprecating, as I do, most unequivocally the whole system, I must nevertheless add my conviction that Masters of Hounds have in a manner drawn the evil upon themselves.

Let us inquire in what Hunts these deeds have been committed. In Colonel Jolliffe's? No. In the country belonging to the Surrey Fox-hounds? No. In Lord Petre's? No, nor in any country that is hunted openly and liberally, and where a stranger can enjoy a day's sport without the trouble or disappointment attendant upon the mysterious method adopted by others.

In all affairs of human life much "give-and-take," or reciprocity, must be observed; and it is not wonderful that people who are refused participation in the amusements derived from the object of their care should soon withdraw their protection.

Taking the case of game, on what farm whose tenant has leave to shoot are birds and hares not found? The farmer has an interest in preserving them from poachers. So with foxes, only greater inducement should be held out to preserve foxes,

because farmers would rather dispense with them; and unless they can be induced to identify themselves with the sport, they will lose no opportunity of destroying foxes, and encourage rather than obstruct the rascally stealers. Nor because men hunt bag-foxes is it to be inferred that they are so wedded to the system that they would not readily follow the legitimate sport if it were possible.

As to the old hackneyed argument that by advertising meets all Cheapside is drawn to your hunt, nothing can be more fallacious. What inconvenience attends those gentlemen who do advertise?

If there were no stag-hounds to draw off the "exuberant spirits," such an argument might be urged; but it is notorious that smaller fields meet the fox-hounds near Town than in any hunting country in England. None but *sportsmen* will go to fox-hounds when stag-hounds are within reach, and from sportsmen no danger nor mischief is ever to be apprehended.

I have long had my eye upon one of these establishments, of which I am sorry to say the horse-dealers are merely the nominal owners, the real proprietors being gentlemen whose rank and situation in life ought to be a guarantee against such practices.

As to the New Surrey Union, I am just going to visit their country; and should I find that they continue their malpractices, I will present them with a New Year's gift in the shape of a full, true, and particular account of themselves in the next number of the 'Sporting Magazine.'

In his "Word on the Old Berkeley," the "Old Fox-hunter" is rather inclined to "run his rigs" upon me. In proof that the land is not in the hands



Clifton Tomson.

Turning out a Bagman.

of small proprietors, he mentions some half-dozen great owners, and goes on to say, "Nim South, I believe, is a stranger in the neighbourhood, and has gained his information over the mahogany." As if it were possible for Nim South to know (unless, indeed, landowners were pleased to devise some method of colouring their estates like countries on a map) whose property he rode over, except it were by hearsay, or, as he says, learned "over the mahogany"!

Any one who reads what I wrote can see that I was a stranger in the country; I expressly stated that I never hunted with the hounds but once. So much for Buckingham!

Allied as I am with several of the resident squirearchy of more than one sporting county, and intimately acquainted with many gentlemen residing in others, it would ill become me to attribute anything illiberal to so truly respectable a body; and nothing will afford me greater pleasure than an opportunity of correcting any statement which may tend to cast a reflection on the followers of the sport.

Now trot up the next article—"A Hint to Sportsmen from an Old Subscriber." Gently with him, he's not a kicker! I shall content myself by saying that my notice respecting the inn in question was not made with a view of injuring the landlord (I am not aware that I have ever seen him), but of benefiting my fellow-sportsmen.

As, however, I make it a rule to proclaim the good inns, a much more pleasing task, it follows that some notice must be taken of the bad ones, else little benefit would accrue to the conscientious landlord.

I will suggest one method of avoiding over-

charges. Let the stable account be added to the house-bill, when there is one, and be made out by the landlord himself instead of the ostler, whereby one reckoning will do for all, and the innkeepers will have nobody to blame but themselves in cases demanding exposure.

Turn me to the nobler pleasures of the chase.

The Quorndon hounds have, I hear, taken up their quarters in their new kennel at Leicester; also that a curious dispute, or perhaps something more, is likely to follow in consequence of its being built too near a Methodist Chapel. I forgot to mention an experiment made by the noble Lord at the head of this pack. He had a large caravan built, in which to convey hounds and the huntsman to the meet; and the first day it was tried, unaccustomed to riding in carriages, and from the want of sufficient air, all the hounds turned out more dead than alive.

I congratulate Mr Mure and the gentlemen of the Suffolk Hunt on their acquisition of country through the liberality of the Marquis of Bristol. Nothing makes a man more popular than such proof of friendly disposition towards hunting; and where, as in this case, the donor does not hunt himself, his action is doubly creditable to him.

On the Sunday after my return from Leicestershire, I rode up to Town to lounge in Tattersall's, and hear what was passing. I found Lord Anson's stud had been sold the week before, the horses bringing, as they ought, good prices.

By the fireside was posted the usual bill of fare —namely, the appointments for the ensuing week of the several packs of hounds in Surrey, furnished by our very obedient servant, Charles Morton. There were the fixtures of the Surrey Stag-hounds,

H. Jolliffe's, Esq., Fox-hounds, the Surrey Fox-hounds, Mr Meager's, and the Sanderstead Harriers.

This mode of advertising is good; as in ordering a dinner, a man has only to choose whether he will hunt venison, fox, or hare; and as the distances of the meets from Croydon are given, he can decide how far it will do him good to ride to the fixture. He who hunts from London must not consider the miles to Croydon; the day's work should begin and end at the latter, unless, of course, he merely goes to see hounds throw off.

CHAPTER X.

THE SURREY STAG-HOUNDS AND FOX-HOUNDS.

A DAY WITH THE SURREY STAG-HOUNDS—CAPT. BRIDGES' DRESS —TREMENDOUS RUN ON 28TH OCTOBER FROM WARLINGHAM —MR JOLLIFFE'S HOUNDS—ROFFEY'S NEW HUNTER—THE SURREY FOX-HOUNDS ADMIRABLY CONDUCTED BY MR HAIGH —HORNE TOOKE—SURREY COUNTY—A DAY AMONG THE FLINTS—GOOD RUN ON 30TH OCTOBER—HUNT COAT—MR HOBSON—MR COURTENAY'S PONY—MR BOOTH'S £5 HUNTER— LADIES FOX-HUNTING—SURREY FOX-HOUNDS RESUMED—TOM HILLS, AN EXCELLENT HUNTSMAN—WHIPPER-IN GOOD—LAST DAY AT GRINSTEAD GREEN—A GREAT SPORTSMAN IN A DASHER —MR BOOTH WANTED—HORSES IN THE HUNT: MR HAIGH'S, MR BAINBRIDGE'S, ETC.

As I ended the last so I commenced the present season [1830-31] by a day with the Surrey Stag-hounds—the meet at Smitham Bottom. They began later than usual; the rutting season, I understand, the cause.

The 23rd of October was their first day, and bating the want of rain, a delightful one it was. Smitham Bottom is a favourable meet for the carriage sportsmen, who are frequently desperate hard riders after stag-hounds, and on this morning many of the fair damsels in the neighbourhood enlivened the scene with their presence. I never saw a better mounted field with stag-hounds than I did on this day; however, "from fear of accidents," we were all capped half-a-crown apiece before starting.

With stag-hounds any costume, I believe, is appropriate, but Captain Bridges, the well-known tandem-driving Devil-Dyke-riding Bridges, certainly does "out-Herod Herod" with his dress —black jockey (not hunting) cap, a scarlet frock coat lined with yellow, mother-o'-pearl buttons with engravings in black, and boots and breeches to correspond.

True to his text, the deer took through the turnpike gate just below the spot where we met, and the toll-keeper capped every man-jack who could not produce a yellow ticket from him who had levied the half-a-crowns above mentioned. Had it been a good scenting day the delay thus caused would have stopped half the field; as it was, hounds and horses trotted on at a most comfortable six-miles-an-hour jog for the first mile, after which, scent improving, we had some pretty wood-hunting, and on taking him we found ourselves within a mile of the start.

On the 28th these hounds had a tremendous run. We know "the last one is always the best," but I believe this really was something quite unusual; indeed, from all accounts it was too good.

The meet was at the Leather Bottle at Warlingham, almost on the boundary between Kent and Surrey, and they turned out a raking Kingston deer, who, having a just abhorrence of roads, led them a dance for nearly four hours across country, finally beating them all, and wishing hounds and men good-night somewhere near Tonbridge Wells. Jonathan returned with a reinforcement, and succeeded in taking him.

I hear that some horses died, among the number a fine chestnut belonging to Mr Maberly. This is the worst of stag-hounds. You are either scram-

bling about the lanes all day, or else get such a routing across country that your horse is not fit to ride again for a month. I am happy to say I was not there; indeed, if I had been, I should have made no bones of pulling up, taking it for granted that they would either beat him or he would beat them. It seems to be agreed on all hands that it was one of the best runs ever known with stag-hounds, and, huntsmanlike, Jonathan swears the last part, which he had all to himself, was far the best.

The Surrey Stag-hounds are very well appointed —everything in very good keeping without ostentation. The whips are young, light, active fellows; and the horses, which I understand they have purchased of Tilbury, are good. Jonathan was riding a very nice bay on the day I was with them.

I have not seen Mr Jolliffe's hounds, except in kennel, since the season began. They have reduced their number of hunting days to five a fortnight, and I am told have shown good sport to small fields, particularly on the 30th from Chaldean Church. It is reported that Mr Jolliffe offered a very large price for Mademoiselle d'Jeck, the famous elephant (for Roffey the huntsman to ride), but she was not to be bought. The old boy hammers away as usual uphill and down; he is always at work, and report says there is no want of foxes.

The Surrey Fox-hounds come next: master, Mr Haigh; huntsman, Tom Hills; with two whippers-in. They would more properly be called "the Kent," having only a very small tract in the former county, extending, I believe, to the Tandridge and part of the Wallington Hundreds. Spending a few days with a friend near Bromley

last summer, we took a ride over to Warlingham to see these hounds in kennel. It was a Sunday in the month of August, and drawing near we saw a man swaggering about in a new scarlet coat with a green collar, tops, and cords; he proved to be the first whip taking the shine out of his garments.

Appearances are most certainly against this establishment. The kennel is formed of the out-premises of a farm, roomy and airy enough, but without many of the elegancies of a kennel. However, it contains the useful in the shape of a very nice pack of hounds. It is a very ancient establishment, being upwards of half a century old; the present huntsman's grandfather originally carried the horn. When Colonel Henry Wyndham (brother of the present owner of fox-hounds in Sussex) gave up his pack, about thirty couple of them were added to the Warlingham establishment, from which several were, however, afterwards drafted. Lasher and Launcher, two stallion hounds, both belonged to Colonel Wyndham; Leader, got by the latter, is one of the best hounds in the pack. There is also some of Mr Warde's blood in the kennel; a bitch called Stately (pale yellow and white) was given by him, and Victory is also his breed. Rifleman, by Mr Jolliffe's Rifleman, is perhaps the handsomest hound in the pack. They have a few with a cross of the Duke of Beaufort's blood—Faithful, I believe, is one.

The stables are behind the kennel, and the horses stand dos-a-dos. Taking them all in all, and considering the circumstances under which they are placed, this is a very fair establishment, and deserving of a much better country.

When I hear people talk of the Duke of that or my Lord this doing the thing in such style,

I admire the men for their taste, but their performances excite no wonder. If men who are masters of their own time, and blessed with every requisite in the way of money and country, cannot give satisfaction, who in the name of Fortune can ? I say the man who will take a bad country with a small subscription in preference to not hunting at all shows himself to be quite as good a sportsman, and that the manner in which Mr Haigh conducts the Surrey Fox-hounds reflects the highest credit upon him.

But, then, your lisping, drawling dandy will say, "Oh, but they are supported by citizens, are they not ? "

Well, what if they are ? Buonaparte said we were a "nation of shopkeepers," so, if he spoke truth, the hunts are all alike. But I should like to ask these paper-headed gentlemen what they would now be if their citizen fathers or grandfathers "had not been born before them," as the saying is.

Out upon such affectation ! As Southey wrote—

> "When Adam delv'd and Eve span,
> Where was then the gentleman ? "

When Horne Tooke was at Eton, one evening the boys were bragging of their origin. One said his father was a duke, and another that his mother was a duchess. Horne Tooke's father kept a chicken-shop in the Poultry. So when they asked him what his father was, he replied, "A great Turkey merchant."

Some of the Old Surrey country is wretched, particularly above hill. Every now and then you come upon immense beds of large loose flints, and, indeed, no part of the district is entirely free from these. No man should think of riding a valuable

horse in it, for one's mount is liable to all sorts of accidents. In galloping the shortest pasterned nag is in danger of cutting the back sinews, and should he make a mistake at his leap, ten to one but the *virginitas* of the knees is gone; even in throwing a shoe, unless the rider could carry that foot in his pocket to the nearest smithy, he must not expect to find much hoof left. The Godstone country below hill is their best.

I had a benefit among the flints the first day I met these hounds. Grinstead Green was the fixture; thence we proceeded to some large coverts called Goodham Lodge Woods abounding in flints—and foxes. It was a bad scenting day, but after a deal of bullying, Hills killed his fox.

I had an excellent day with them on the 30th October. The meet was the well-known Botley Hill. The coverts near drew blank; so we went below hill, and after a good deal of wood-hunting in the neighbourhood of Squerries (classic ground, the seat of Mr John Warde, father of fox-hunters), we passed through Mr Briscoe's park, and drew some coverts about two miles to the west of it. Here we found about two in the afternoon, and without hanging much, the fox went away for the hills, a favourite retreat, up which we had a breather. He kept along the hill-top for some miles, and seemed inclined to do the thing handsomely, but was headed in some pleasure grounds belonging to a house which stands close to the Godstone Road, and steered due north, again turned, and crossing to the south of Marden Park, made back for the hills, when my horse gave me a hint that he had had enough.

Those Surrey hills are the devil's own! They take far more out of a horse than a 20 minutes' gallop. The first whip, who is somewhat bulky, thought

prudent to exchange with the other who had made for the hills at starting. The men are certainly rather too heavy, but they understand their business thoroughly. The second whip is old, and does not take much part in the proceedings.

A scarlet frock with a green collar and plain gilt buttons is the Hunt coat; the servants wear caps. The green and red is a funny mixture; some say it was chosen because with a greatcoat over it a man could ride out of town in his tilbury without it being supposed he was going to hunt, nothing appearing but an olive-green collar. Whether it really was so intended I do not know, but it certainly has that advantage.

Mr Hobson of Tottenham is one of the old standards of this Hunt. Notwithstanding the distance, he travels from his own house to the meet almost every hunting day, and returns home after the sport. I met him once or twice last season with Colonel Jolliffe's hounds, when he was pointed out to me as a veteran, and I believe he is one of the oldest sportsmen in Surrey. "Hobson's Choice" in horses is not bad; they possess more strength than speed—a very necessary thing considering the size of his "bay-window."

I saw a very clever little pony out one day with these hounds ridden by a son of Mr Courtenay. He was rather too heavy for it, but the manner in which the little animal scrambled through its leaps was extraordinary. A lady sometimes patronises the Surrey attended by two cavaliers, and the three form rather a droll party. She stuck fast in a hedge one day, and it puzzled one of her attendants, an old gentleman named Booth, to push her through. Mr Booth was mounted on a magnificent hunter, for which he gave a whole

five pounds, and in the plentitude of his wit challenged the whole field to set him. He went home before we found, unfortunately for the Coroner.

I do not like to see women out with fox-hounds. A man does not like riding before them, or leaving them in the lurch; and even if they do "go along," the whole field is kept in alarm lest an accident happen. With harriers it is all very well, because whether you jump a fence or take five minutes to pull it down makes but little difference in the general way; but it is quite *une autre chose* with fox-hounds.

I have already stated my opinion of the merits of the Surrey Fox-hounds, and what I have since seen of them convinces me of its correctness. My friend Tom Hills, the huntsman, does, however, deserve an additional feather in his cap, for of all the persevering fellows after a fox that I ever saw, he is the most persevering. As a countryman said to me one day when I was riding to covert, "Ay, but Tom does love dearly to eat his fox."

Nor are the merits of the first whip to be passed over in silence. He, too, is an excellent fellow, and his eyes glisten again in relating their "capital gallops," as he calls them. Both men have excellent voices, though, if anything, they use them rather too freely. If the first whip was split in two, and his lungs fairly divided, no man need wish for two better servants than he would make. Tom Hills' son acted as second whip last season, and was much approved; but I did not hear what has become of him.

The 13th November was my last day with these hounds, on which, being a Saturday, we had a larger field. The meet again, Grinstead Green in

Kent; the weather raw and miserable. I do not think I was ever out in a worse scenting day.

There was not much novelty remaining, though, I must confess, I was somewhat surprised at the number of heroes in caps, or what our forefathers termed "dashers," it being generally supposed that the wearers were expected to take all *in stroke*, refusing nothing, not even a windmill. What would our great-grandfathers, those five o'clock drag-hunting boys, have said had they seen the little man with the velvet shooting-jacket and top-boots (one of which would have held both his legs and his dinner into the bargain) who this day appeared at the covertside in a cap, mounted on a pony compared to which Mr Booth's five-pound hunter was an Arabian. I regretted Mr Booth's absence on this day—two such sportsmen were never seen together in any country!

I did not see many good horses with the Hunt; indeed, as I have said, no man should ride a valuable horse in this country. Mr Haigh is always well mounted; and there is a clipped chestnut (servant's horse), bought of Kettle the dealer at Addington, brother to the noisy man at Lewes, which looks like a goer. The neatest horse I saw was a white or light grey belonging to Mr Bainbridge, who is an excellent hand on horseback. Taking the horse altogether, he is about as pretty a one to look at as ever I saw. I am surprised, though, that such a good sportsman as Mr Bainbridge should make it a rule to hunt in trousers; it looks grocer-like, to say the least.

On the 13th we had some of the slowest hunting I ever witnessed; a cold bleak wind destroyed the scent, and though at one time we were close upon him, still we could not walk into our fox.

I think if Hills had been left to himself he would have managed it, for, with the aid of divers lifts, he had gained considerably upon him, when, luckily for us (for night was then approaching, and we were several miles from our hacks), a thumping hare jumped up before the hounds, and, tired as they were with persevering so long on a cold scent, every hound ran riot.

I do not know that I ever saw a whole pack do so before; in general, these hounds are particularly steady. We could only account for it by the badness of the scent and their being thoroughly tired of hunting it. The hounds were immediately whipped off, and we all whipped home, and I could almost have eaten my horse before I reached it, I was so hungry.

CHAPTER XI.

COLONEL JOLLIFFE'S AGAIN.

A GALLANT RUN WITH COLONEL JOLLIFFE'S ON 4TH DECEMBER FROM CHIPSTEAD CHURCH—NO WANT OF HOUNDS OR SPORTSMEN IN SURREY—MOST OF THE FIELD FLOORED—ROFFEY'S BUGLE—HIS CHESTNUT MARE—THE MARE AT TATTERSALL'S—JACK'S NEW HORSE—NIM SOUTH'S PAD AND THE WHITE SHEPHERD—THE DEER AND SHEEP—JOURNEY TO LEATHERHEAD OVER THE DOWNS—SWING ABOUT AS USUAL—ANOTHER SHEPHERD—LEATHERHEAD A BAD HUNTING QUARTER.

I HAVE stated my intention to take a day or two with Mr Jolliffe's hounds before I left Surrey. In point of fact, I have only had one; but that was as good as two in the general order of things.

As if to increase my regret at leaving a country in which I have had so many pleasant days, and made so many agreeable acquaintances, my last day's sport was destined to be the best. In fact, it was one of those days a few only of which occur in the course of each season; and I am much mistaken if it was not a propitious one for hounds throughout the country—it was the 4th December. The morning was somewhat hazy, though without fog, and there was an agreeable freshness and softness in the air, which continued throughout the day. There seemed to be a grand review of all the packs: the stag-hounds met at Smitham Bottom, Mr Jolliffe's at Chipstead Church, the Surrey Fox-hounds at Godstone, the Sanderstead

at the Kennel, and Mr Meager's—I do not know where.

I left London early in the morning, riding a hunter gently down for exercise, having sent another on the previous night. Sportsmen do not stand much upon the ceremony of an introduction, and I generally join in conversation with the first booted man I see. There was no lack of company this morning: first I met a hare-hunter; then came a Jolliffe man; next a phaeton with a brace of Surrey fox-hunters, who did now know of Mr Jolliffe's fixture; and there were no end of stag-hunters, in all the colours of the rainbow. Some mornings men are in better humour than others; and on this day all seemed to have got out of bed on the right side, and

> "Those talked who never talked before,
> And those who always talked, now talked the more."

After passing through Croydon the horsemen came pouring in from all directions—some by the road, some by the Downs, others along the hill-tops, and for the first time I saw a piebald horse in the hunting field. The stag-hounds threw off at half-past ten, and as I passed by their meet on my way to the fox-hounds I halted a few minutes to have a little chat.

By this I lost one of the finest features in a day's sport—viz., seeing a fox well found; for, almost immediately on throwing into covert, a gallant one broke away, and Roffey's bugle soon apprised me of the fact. I was, however, before the pack, and viewed him as he crossed a gentleman's park. A short check took place, the fox having turned suddenly in the direction of Banstead Woods. They, however, ran him through

some pleasure grounds, and went away direct for this large covert, and doubts were entertained of his leaving it again. He was, however, above taking shelter so early in the day; and having run the covert for a quarter of an hour, again broke away, taking a line direct for Merstham, where the Kennel is, thinking the most polite thing he could do was to see the hounds safe home after the early visit they had paid him.

He then took the hill at the corner of a plantation, and, passing through the lower part of Gatton Park, crossed the London Road, and went over Red Hill, where, by threading a covert surrounded by a common, he took us a mile or two to the south-east. He then took a fresh line altogether, going due west, some miles below hill, and passing through some very deep ground. It was pretty evident he was sinking; the music of the hounds became doubly exciting, and every man did his best to lay well in with them.

As a finisher he led us over a swampy bottom with a brook in the centre; immediately after came two fences, with brooks enclosing some ploughed land. All would not do. He began to run short; and finally, in a fallow field, the whole pack ran in to him, after a run of two hours and a quarter. Not a single hound was missing when they killed.

Of the field I cannot say so much: some got as far as the hills, others not so far, and some got below; but before we reached that point it had gradually dispersed.

Very early in the run I saw standing in the corner of a field a horse with his mouth wide open, calling for his mother, while no inducement of the rider could get him to raise a foot at his fence; another was left in a brook; a third in a ditch;



ROFFEY ON HIS CHESTNUT MARE.

and several men remained in Banstead Woods, reckoning that the fox would not go away.

In at the death were Mr William Jolliffe, who rode admirably; Roffey the huntsman, Jack the whipper-in, Mr Pagden, of course; and four other gentlemen in scarlet whose names I did not catch. I trust they will excuse the liberty I take in describing them. One rode a white horse, and, as all men who ride white horses should do, rode well; a second rode a clipped one, and got a devil of a roll, the horse treading upon his groin (Surrey-like, he sported mother-o'-pearl buttons); a third had a queer waistcoat made of plaid, and rode a long-legged thorough-bred mare; the fourth was on a bay. There were also eight or ten others in colours; some of them, however, joined during the chase.

There was one man wanting to make the day complete, and that was Colonel Jolliffe, who, I regret to hear, has not been out this season.

Those who have been in my situation know the extreme difficulty there is in obtaining correct information with respect to the management of hounds. Some say that Colonel Jolliffe does not intend to hunt any more; others that he has been prevented in consequence of an injury he received by the overturning of his carriage; others that Mr Wm. Jolliffe takes the hounds alone without a subscription; others again, that Colonel Jolliffe has done so! Amid such conflicting assertions from native sportsmen it would ill become me, a stranger, to hazard any conjecture.

I never saw Roffey in greater force than on this day. He looked exactly like the picture of the old-fashioned huntsman of a century back—his curly grey or white hair bushing out from

beneath his cap, the blue coat with yellow lining, and yellow breeches, and, above all, his bugle. I have since seen Tom Hills, who also has one; and I am now less in favour of bugles.

Roffey's flourish at the death was capital. You really must have a picture of him in the Magazine. He rode his chestnut mare, which carried him admirably, throughout. I remember when Colonel Joliffe sent his horses to Tattersall's last spring I walked through the stable with Roffey to look at them. When we came to the mare he made a dead halt.

"I'd sooner give five pounds out of my own pocket than she should be selled," said Roffey. "But is she not for sale?" said I. "Yes," said he, "but I can tell you that the man maun open his mouth d——d woide that buy her," suiting the action to the word and extending his jaws.

I am sorry to say that the servants are rather short of horses since one of Jack's took it into his head to drop down dead, nearly "cranching his leg," as he said. He was riding for the first time on this day a very neat brown, which some gentleman at Croydon had sent. It was rather difficult to manage at first, not relishing the touch of the coat-laps. However, Jack soon cured the horse of that whim with a touch of the spur, and told me he was very well pleased with his mount.

I do not keep a "pad-dery" some men do on their stable doors; but, thinking to have some souvenir of the country and this gallant fox, I followed the example of another gentleman and took one. Mark the consequence!

Having turned in the direction of the great city, I travelled slowly, wishing to give my horse a chance after his exertions. About dusk I came

near Hooley Lane Gate, which opens upon the common that extends to Croydon. In the middle of the road stood a large white object, which, as I approached, proved to be a large white shepherd. "Stop," said he, as he placed his crook before my horse's nose, "ye maun ge me yeer 'dress——" "What for, sir?" said I; "what use will it be of to you?" "I maun har it," replied he; "yeer d——d deer dogs have played the very devil with my ewes. They will all slip lamb, and I mean to be satisfied for the damage." I then remembered that as I rode up the hill to Chipstead Church in the morning I saw a large animal which I thought was a donkey charging a flock of sheep most vigorously about a mile east of our meet. It was this identical deer, and no inducement of the shepherd or his dog could get it to abandon the flock.

"You are mistaken," said I; "I was not with the deer-dogs but the fox-dogs"; and, producing the pad, effectually closed the argument.

At Croydon I learned that the first deer they turned out had refused to run; therefore at half-past one they uncarted a second, which ran three hours and a half; and just as they thought to take him, near Norwood, where he had lain down, up he sprang before the pack, and ran clean away from them. I am told he jumped an enclosure ten feet high, but I do not vouch for the truth of this.

I fell in with some Surrey men, who also informed me they had had a capital run. I am not a cockney, as your readers will perhaps believe when I say that I never was at Ascot in my life, nor at Epsom, until I went to hunt with the Union Fox-hounds in November last.

About the middle of that same month of gloomy

memory I was suddenly seized with a fit of the economics; and being in London, says I to myself, I will go to Croydon by the coach, ride the horse I hunted with the Surrey Hounds the other day over to Leatherhead this evening, and try if I can meet with the Union to-morrow.

So having arranged matters, and sent my hunting things by the coach to Leatherhead, I set off on my travels. I always carry a map of the country in which I go to hunt; and having made the usual survey of it on the coach top as I travelled to Croydon, the road appeared to be through Sutton, Ewell, and Epsom.

I was on the point of starting by that route when my groom said, "I suppose, sir, you know the way over the Downs?" "No, I do not," said I; "I am going by the road, for I do not like your Downs." "You will find it very far round, sir," said he. "May be," said I, "but 'Swing' is about as usual I suppose (for the country then was in the height of its troubles), and he may catch me and flay me alive." "You are more likely to be stopped on the road," said he. "The deuce!" said I. "Yes," said he. "Then I will go by the Downs," said I; "but direct me the way." "Why," says he, "turn to the left when you get to the 'Plough' at Beddington, and keep along the lane, and turn up past a windmill; and then you will see another windmill on the hill-top as far as ever you can see; pass by that also, and keep straight forward by some fir-trees, and you will see the New Stand at Epsom Race-course; pass it, and you will be only four miles from Leatherhead." "Very good," said I, and wrote it all down; and sure enough there seemed no possibility of going wrong before I came to Epsom Downs.

The evening was fine and still; the sun set beautifully like Captain Swing illuminating the skies, and the scenery was both novel and wild. Naturally of a thoughtful disposition, I rode slowly over the Downs, admiring the prospect, and wondering whether I should have beef-steak or mutton chops for dinner; and to do the thing sportingly I intended laying a bet upon the subject when I reached the Stand. Ere I arrived, though, my thoughts took a different turn. The first shades of night had fallen, and it struck me that I did not know my way any farther. The Stand is a fine building, said I, but I would rather see a man to tell me the road to Leatherhead. (What a name!)

Night was now closing in, and I could just see to read the name "Hughes" upon a building near the Stand. Seeing a house a little farther off, I rode up, and after knocking some time, a woman half-opened the door, and in reply to my inquiries desired me to "stick" to some park railings on the right, adding, "When you get up the hill, you'll see some one," and at once shut the door.

May be I shall see somebody I don't like, thought I, as I followed her direction; and just as I got into the valley, I saw a blaze of light among the trees, and immediately came upon a gang of gipsies. This was relief to my mind, for at all events I knew these honest people would only rob me at most; but preferring to deny them the chance of even that, I put spurs to my horse and dashed past them.

I had now reached the hilltop on the opposite side, and the park-paling took a different turn—one road following the same direction, the other running straight forward. I took the latter, and

came to a signpost, and after a good deal of puzzling, deciphered TO LEATHERHEAD. "All right," said I, and jogged on, but shortly after, in a small ravine in which stood a barn, I again came to fault. One road took to the right, the other again went forward, and I again risked the chance of the latter. Presently I got into a nasty, long, narrow lane, straight as the road to Salvation, but which appeared as likely to lead to another place.

I determined to follow it, though my heart misgave me that I had over-run the scent; and thinking of the toast wishing the man who would not do something or other might find himself "in a nasty, long, narrow lane nine hundred and ninety-nine miles from home, with a tired horse under him a——" Oh! there we will stop—*cætera desunt quia non decent.* Well, I saw the far end of the lane, and where do you think it brought me? On Leatherhead Downs! And I had not advanced fifty yards farther before all vestige of road was lost.

There was a nice predicament for a man with a wife and five children!—caught on Leatherhead Downs on a dark November night, as Sir Robert Peel would say.

Well, I dismounted to try and recover the scent, but it was of no use: I could find neither track nor footstep right or left. I went on, nevertheless, in hopes of seeing a light—even one of Swing's would have been agreeable just then, but nothing of the sort appeared—common around me and fog below; and the young moon only served to make darkness visible.

What shall I do, thinks I: make my lodging on the wet ground (for it was deuced swampy), or set to and bellow, and rouse the neighbour-

hood (if there is any), or perhaps attract Captain Swing?

The latter seemed most advisable, so exerting my lungs I commenced hallooing (not tally-ho-ing) most manfully; but I had it all to myself—not even an echo acknowledged receipt of my voice.

This is no use, said I. I'll keep my voice for another occasion; and getting on horseback again, I set off at a hand-canter, letting the animal go which way he pleased. After some time we came upon a cart-rut, which he immediately adopted as his route, and presently a dog flew out and commenced barking.

Tongue from the deepest-toned hound never sounded more melodious than did the bark of this shepherd's cur; and again raising my voice I called out, "Shepherd, shepherd!" but no, he would not answer. He thought I was Swing, and I began to think he was. As a last resort, I called out, "Which is the way to Leatherhead?" and a trembling voice within ten yards of me tardily replied, "Straight forward."

I never saw the speaker, but I presently saw something much pleasanter, and perhaps quite as intellectual—viz., two gateposts, forming the entrance into another lane leading straight to the port and beefsteaks for which I was bound.

I took up my quarters at the Swan, very glad to find myself there after my wild-goose chase; not that either the stables or the house are very tempting—indeed, the former are sorry holes—but a man must take things as he finds them in this world, and any place was preferable to Leatherhead Downs. As a matter of fact, there are no good stables on this side of the county, at which I marvel, seeing that the stag-hounds visit it so often.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SURREY UNION AND SOME HARRIERS.

THE UNION FOX-HOUNDS—KIT ATKINSON, HUNTSMAN—RIOTOUS MEETING OF LABOURERS AT DORKING—STATE OF THE COUNTRY—LIFE GUARDS DOWN—THE UNION HUNT COMPOSED OF SPORTSMEN—FIXTURES SECRET—SNAFFLE-BRIDLE HORSES—A GOOD ONE—ANOTHER DAY WITH THE UNION AT EFFINGHAM—FOX BADLY LOST—PRINCIPAL GENTLEMEN IN THE HUNT—A VISITOR—MR DUNDAS—COUNTRY DESCRIBED—UNIFORM OF THE HUNT—MR MEAGER'S HARRIERS—CAPTAIN FREEMAN'S—MR MEAGER'S KENNEL—WHIPPER-IN, PLOUGHMAN—A DAY WITH THEM AT CHEAM—GREAT EXTENSION OF COUNTRY—SCARCITY OF HARES—GREYHOUND COURSING—MR MEAGER A GOOD SPORTSMAN—PLOUGHMAN'S LOVE OF ROAST HARE—THE SANDERSTEAD HARRIERS—BLUE MOTTLES—THE HUNTSMAN, WEAVER—BREEDING HOUNDS LIGHTER—AN ENDOWED PACK—DEAF WHIPPER-IN—AN OFFICIOUS OLD GENTLEMAN—FUNERAL ORATION—A SHILLING'S-WORTH OF HUNTING—CAPPING—CONCLUSION—REVIEW OF COUNTRIES AND HOUNDS—AND THANKS TO THE MASTERS.

MANY men think that half the pleasure in fox-hunting consists in knowing all the field. I grant that it is not without its attractions; but I also like going out in search of novelty, to take my chance of falling in with an old acquaintance, or occupy myself entirely with the sport. Thus it was that I met the Union Fox-hounds, as I have met many others, and hope to meet many more. Here, however, both country and hounds were new, for I had never before seen either one or the other.

The fixture was Polesden, a few miles south-east of Leatherhead, whither I set off somewhat early to have a look at the hounds. I found stationed at the lodge leading to a gentleman's house twenty couple of dogs and bitches accompanied by a sporting-looking huntsman, Kit Atkinson by name, with a somewhat elderly whipper-in.

The hounds are chiefly the Duke of Beaufort's blood; I believe they get a few bitches every year from Badminton. Some of the bitches are uncommonly fine and powerful, more so, I thought, in proportion than the dog-hounds. They have one fault, however, and that of no small magnitude—they are the worst gorse-drawers I ever saw. This is the more unpardonable, as I understand they have several very excellent gorse coverts.

How Atkinson could let hounds slink through a covert one after another as they did like a flock of geese I cannot imagine; I am sure he did not learn it of Sir Bellingham Graham, whose whipper-in he formerly was. On this day we had a good deal of covert and common hunting, the fox running very short, for which he was deservedly killed. I believe he never got far away from Ranmer Common, a few miles from Dorking, at which latter place there was a large assemblage of labourers, to disperse whom a troop of Life Guards had marched through Leatherhead in the morning.

During the late fires and disturbances I was frequently in both Kent and Surrey, and had opportunities of conversing with many labouring men; and, from what I both saw and heard, have no hesitation in saying that, though there were some disaffected individuals—as there are in all grades of society,—yet that a great majority of the labouring class were well-disposed, and that

very many who attended those tumultuous meetings were either acting under the influence of fear or delusion, which decisive measures would have removed.

One poor fellow at Dorking refused to leave the street after the Riot Act had been read, and, clinging to a post, swore he had a right to be there. A Life Guardsman remonstrated with him, but to no avail; so bringing one side of his horse to bear upon him, he touched him with the spur, and gave him such a nip between it and the post that he abandoned his right and took to his heels. Better this than using his sabre on the man.

But to return to the Union.

As I said before, we had not much sport; at least, not for fox-hounds, though it would have been a pretty day with harriers. The field was not large, but the men who were out had more the appearance of sportsmen than the other Surrey men. In fact, most of the members are, I believe, resident country gentlemen; and the distance of the kennel from London is just sufficient to keep away many people who like to hunt and be back in town to answer their letters before the post goes out. Besides this, they keep their fixtures somewhat secret—not that a man going to Leatherhead need have any difficulty in learning them.

Then, again, the want of accommodation for horses keeps others away. The horses in the Union Hunt are also much superior to the rest, and I saw more snaffle-bridle mounts with them than with all the others put together. Now a snaffle-bridle horse is very nice, as we all know; but I also know that there is not one real snaffle-bridle horse in fifty, and am much mistaken if some of the gentlemen would not have been all the better for a curb.

I once saw an excellent example of a snaffle-bridle horseman. It was with a very crack pack of fox-hounds that I hunted with many years ago. One day a little old man came out on a tearing chestnut horse in a plain snaffle, who, whether the hounds were running or at fault, would always be in the middle of them.

"Hold hard, sir, hold hard! For God's sake, sir, hold hard!" hallo'd the Master, losing all patience, when, for the third time, the little man dashed into the middle of the pack. "Hold hard!" said he, bearing all his power upon the bridle; "by Gad, sir, I wish I could hold hard!"

The Union hunt three days a week—Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; the kennel is at Fetcham, a mile or two from Leatherhead.

I met them again just at the close of November. The fixture was The Blucher at Effingham, about four miles from Leatherhead in the Guildford direction. We had a much larger field on this day and, on the whole, better sport. The morning was desperately cold, affording very little hopes of scent; we were, however, agreeably deceived, for it proved a very good scenting day. After drawing some time, we found in Greatlea Wood, but he was a short running beggar, and kept changing his line.

I do not know whether Mr Bolton or Mr Hankey is the Master of these hounds, though I believe the former. Mr Ladbrooke is one of their principal men. On hearing his name, I thought he might be friend Ladbrooke of Sussex; but I was mistaken, for this Mr Ladbrooke would make two of the Sussex man. Mr Claggett is the best appointed man in Surrey, and I am only surprised that he does not hunt in a better country. The Hon. Mr Dundas, one of the M.P.'s for York, was out on

the last day I hunted with them, and went, as he does in his own country, like a good one.

As to country, the Union, I should say, have the lion's share both in quantity and quality, the hills in their part being smaller and the flints fewer. Their kennel is situate almost on the extreme edge of Colonel Jolliffe's country. Box Hill, a covert of his, is due south of Leatherhead, whence, I believe, his territory runs down through the Wooton Hundred into Sussex, the Union having the whole of the west side of the county up to the borders of Hampshire. The Hunt dress is a plain scarlet coat with plain white-plated buttons; the men wear caps.

I must not take leave of the country without a word about Mr Meager's and the Sanderstead Harriers, both well known to London sportsmen.

The former is a private pack kept at the gentleman's own residence, Pitt Place, a nice quiet retreat a mile out of Croydon. There are twenty-two couple of very nice hounds, some, such as Porter and Pilgrim, rather too large for harriers; Jewess, Wragland, Stranger, and Valiant are very neat hounds—indeed, taking them as a whole, they are a very superior establishment. Captain Freeman, who now hunts the Southwold country, used to have a very good pack of harriers in Berkshire, all of which, I believe, were the small hounds drafted by the Masters of Fox-hounds, which for symmetry are not to be surpassed, the difficulty being, as we all know, to breed the large hounds perfect, the smaller being generally pretty well for that.

For my own taste I am not partial to large powerful harriers which run into a hare at view. There is far more of the real science of hunting with harriers than fox-hounds, and I like to trot

after them and admire their efforts to counteract the hare's manœuvres.

Mr Meager's kennel is good, bating the want of water; it is divided into three parts, the centre containing the boiling-house and feeding-yard. The Master hunts the hounds himself, assisted by a whipper-in named Ploughman, an unassuming man, who informed me one Sunday when I called to look at his hounds that they did not know the difference between Sunday and Monday, and so why should he? They hunt three days a week, generally on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; but, like many private packs, they are not certain. Disliking a crowd, Mr Meager has discontinued advertising his meets; however, they can generally be learned at the livery stables at Croydon.

I paid my respects to them early in November. The meet was somewhere about Cheam, a nice open country, but they had thrown off before I got there. Never having seen Mr Meager, I figured to myself as I rode along a regular "Tommy wiwante," as the Cockneys call the living skeleton, and was agreeably surprised to find a jolly-looking English country squire. He wore a black cap and a green dressing-gown of a frock-coat, attended by Ploughman in a costume exactly similar; and so like were master and man in figure that it was difficult to say which was Meager and which was Ploughman.

Mr Meager's hound language is peculiar and original. I have seen many huntsmen, but I have never yet seen what the French would call his *double*. I have not the slightest idea what the words were; they might be Italian, but I think not; however, there was a long string of them.

Notwithstanding the great extent of country Ploughman says they possess, I am sorry to say that, except in their home area, there are but few hares. We killed our first very early in the day, in as good style as I have ever seen, after a burst of five-and-twenty minutes. We then whipped every thistle and hedge for some hours before we found another, when some pot-hunter could not resist the temptation of capping the hounds from chase to view, and we ran into her in five minutes; I am, however, happy to say the hounds ate her. Independently of the destruction such killing as this works among the hares, there are some much more destructive animals called greyhounds, which infest part of the country Mr Meager hunts.

I have been at all sports, from the four-in-hand coach-box to the cock-pit, with the exception of greyhound coursing; and though I have accidentally seen a hare coursed as I have passed along the road, never joined this blood-chilling pot-hunting—I do not know what to call it, not sport certainly.

I consider Mr Meager a very good sportsman in this line; he is careful to avoid doing damage, and anxious to conciliate all parties. Ploughman is a useful fellow, devotedly attached to roast hare; his little black eyes are stuck into his head like two black currants.

The Sanderstead kennel is at the village of Sanderstead, three miles south-east of Croydon, at the house (I believe) of Mr Grant. The pack consists of twenty-five couple of hounds, of the old blue-mottle breed, of which there are very few now remaining. It is somewhat singular that the huntsmen of Mr Meager's and these hounds should have such inappropriate names—one called

Ploughman, the other Weaver. The latter, not being aware of the value of a genuine article, is introducing other blood into the kennel by way of breeding the hounds of a lighter colour. This is slow, to say the best of it. They have one very pretty bitch called Music; she is also a very good one. The Sanderstead are a subscription pack, and there is a tradition of their being "endowed," some old gentlemen having bequeathed a sum of money for their maintenance and education.

I cannot compliment Weaver upon his proficiency as a huntsman, neither can I say much for his whipper-in, who, in addition to other good qualities, is nearly as deaf as a post. There is no fear of his riding to a false halloo at all events. An old gentleman who goes out with these hounds makes himself somewhat unnecessarily officious. With all the hounds I have followed in Surrey—stag, fox, or hare,—I never heard so much "war' wheat, and turnips!" as he gave us. The way he commenced was ridiculous; I thought he was going to deliver a funeral oration. Says he: "Gentlemen, as in all human probability when we find a hare you will ride away and leave me, let me beseech you to do as little damage to the crops as possible, particularly to the turnips and *mustard*." I only had one shilling's worth of hunting with them, and that was ninepence more than it was worth.

Weaver does not seem to know that it is his business to be with the hounds; he seems rather to think that the hare must run one particular way for which he makes, and that if she takes another she will find out her mistake and come back. He and the whip turn out in dark green coats with red waistcoats, and hats instead of caps. A field with harriers is always a nondescript

assemblage, but for real gluttons of thistle-whippers the Sanderstead are equalled only by the Brighton. Like them they are most determined "cappers"; and for seeing a hare chopped the officious old gentleman troubled me for a shilling. I have recorded my opinion on the capping system, and the more I see it the more am I convinced of its impropriety.

I now take my leave of the county of Surrey. In the words of my friend Horace, I may say, *Non est aptus equis*—"It is not a good hunting country."

Of the hounds, my opinion is that Mr Jolliffe's are by far the best; that the management is the best, and the fields the pleasantest in Surrey; and that after his I would prefer hunting with the Union, though the Surrey are better hunted; that the Union country is the best, Mr Jolliffe's the next, and the Surrey the worst. Nor must I omit to state that, as a country friendly to hounds, I never saw its equal. I now offer my sincere thanks to all the Masters of Hounds in Surrey for the civility which as a stranger I have invariably experienced from them during my progress through the country.

'Sporting Magazine.'

END OF THE SOUTHERN TOUR.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CRAVEN.

1830-1831.

THE "NEW COACH"—TWO MR SMITHS—MISTAKE OF GROOM—HE IS TAKEN FOR AN INCENDIARY—JOURNEY BY MAIL TO HUNGERFORD—PLEASURES OF TRAVELLING TO HUNT IN FROSTY WEATHER—MEETING THE CRAVEN HOUNDS FOR THE FIRST TIME—GOOD RUN FROM THE HOLLIES—THE FIELD.

I COMMENCED as a writer in the Old Magazine under many disadvantages—not the least that of succeeding to an able and favourite writer.

In making this my second début, I come before the public with the advantages derived from intercourse with the members of many hunts. During the last season I have been in seventeen different counties, in most of which I was unknown to be the author of Nim South's letters, and consequently had opportunities of hearing unbiassed opinions respecting their contents. I look back with satisfaction and gratitude for the many acts of kindness and civility which I experienced in those where I was known.

Having had an inside seat with my face to the horses in the "Old Coach," it may naturally be supposed that I have not stepped into a new one without some probability of its being able to keep on the road. But, indeed, if what the proprietors tell me be true, there is sufficient room

for both, so without more ado we will shut the door and start.

And in what country can I make a better beginning than the Craven? A name dear to sportsmen, an old-established country, and hunted for sixteen seasons by the celebrated John Warde, whose portrait adorns this, the first number of the 'New Sporter.'

Before commencing I must crave a little indulgence for myself, and premise that my narrative begins in the middle of the season, having "Nim South'd" in the Old Magazine during the earlier part of it, and only started my horses for that country about the middle of December, a month better adapted for skating than hunting. I sent them from London to Watford in the first instance, intending to have a day with the Berkeley Hounds at Bricket Wood; but the night bringing a sharp frost, I wrote to my groom desiring him to strike his tent as soon as the weather would permit, and make the best of his way to Hungerford, which I described as a small town on the borders of Wiltshire, and the *residence* of the Craven Hounds. I told him on his arrival to present himself at the kennel, and ask the servants if they could put him in the way of finding a stable. Upon receipt of his instructions he set off, and on the afternoon of the second day found himself opposite the Bear Inn, Hungerford, when, summoning a hairy-capped ostler, he asked the way to Mr Smith's of the Manor House. "Oh," replied he, "you are five or six miles from it yet. Keep along the road, and then turn to the right, and then to your left, and then to your right, and then to your left again, and it will bring you to Ramsbury, and then turn again," &c., in the usual approved form of a chawbacon's



W. Barraud.

John Warde on Blue Ruin.

instructions, given upon the principle that "one good turn deserves another."

I remember once going to a small country town in search of a "Mr Smith." Seeing a neat brass plate upon a door with that name engraved thereon, and concluding, of course, it was the Mr Smith I wanted, I knocked, and the door was opened by a gruff portly man, who, after hearing what I had to say, replied with this valuable piece of information: "Sir, if you had lived as long in the world as I have done, you would know that there are more Mr Smiths in it than one!" I have since ascertained that it is possible for two Mr Smiths, bearing also the same Christian name, to live at two Manor Houses within a few miles of each other. In proof whereof my horses found themselves at Mr T. Smith's of Ramsbury Manor House instead of Mr T. Smith's of Hungerford Manor House. Here I tender my acknowledgments to Mr Smith of Ramsbury for his kindness, for, on finding the mistake my servant had made and the distance the horses had travelled, he desired they might be taken to his stable, and remain there over the following day, as being nearer to the next meet than they would be at Hungerford. I was in hopes of meeting him in the field during the time I remained in the Craven country, and of expressing my thanks in person.

The groom availed himself of Mr Smith's kind offer, got his horses put up, and had his own supper, when a thought suddenly struck him: I might not be pleased at the arrangement! Therefore, without more ado, he took the horses out again and set off for the inn at the village of Ramsbury.

Mr Swing at that time was in his glory. The

labourers were rioting, and the country was full of alarm; consequently every stranger was liable to suspicion. My man's premature departure from such good quarters naturally roused Mr Smith's curiosity, and as Mr Swing was reported to travel *à cheval*, he thought he might either be the man himself or some of the fraternity; consequently two men were dispatched to watch his movements, and endeavour to lead him into conversation.

Now had my man known me to be "Nim South," I should, of course, have enjoined him to secrecy, and ten to one his evasive answers would have procured him a temporary abode in Reading or Salisbury Jail. As it was, all he could tell them was that he was ——, servant of —— (of course), and that his master was a "devilish good fellow."

The frost, which commenced the day after my horses left their own stable, gave evident symptoms of breaking about the 21st, and so decided a thaw was it on the 22nd that I took a seat for Hungerford by the Bath mail of that night, which the book-keeper stated would set me down there somewhere about three o'clock in the morning, giving me a few hours' rest before hunting.

Accordingly I took a chop at Hatchett's (what a happy concatenation!), and a little before eight turned out into Piccadilly "to look at old Nox." He looked very black overhead, added to which a sharpish storm was passing, consisting of that mixture of snow and rain commonly called sleet. I have long been convinced that there is no economy in travelling outside a coach in bad weather. I therefore went into the office to change my seat for a berth in the cabin. What confusion was there! The scene was worthy the pencil of a Hogarth: an old woman exerting

her lungs because a coachman had made a present of her umbrella to another passenger; a man swearing because his portmanteau had been thrown on the pavement, whereby his linen was saturated with whisky, a bottle of which he had stuck in the top to be more easily got at; a book-keeper's risible faculties excited at discovering that a parcel directed to T——, Wells, "with the utmost dispatch," had taken a trip to Wells in Somersetshire instead of Tonbridge Wells in Kent. Around the door was the usual din, occasioned by a hundred merchants of different descriptions proclaiming the virtues of their various wares: one with black-lead pencils, twelve for a shilling, with an invitation to "cut 'em and try 'em"; another with a good pocket-knife, "twelve blades and a saw, sir"; a third with a tame squirrel, or a piping bullfinch which would whistle "God save the King" and "The Duke of York's March," to be given for an old coat; a fourth with one hundred and fifty new songs all for one penny, with an occasional recital of the latest one, accompanied by the muffin-man's tinkling treble, the deeper bass of George Stapleton, the night-man, the hollow cry of "'Cou*ria*'! 'Evening Cou*ria*'! Great news! great news from Portingal! Don *My-jewel* dead, great news!"; the placard boys hawking the 'Public and Private Life of Madame Vestris,' with a model of her leg, all for one penna! Barcelona merchants, orange merchants, sponge merchants, patent-leather strap merchants, hand-bill merchants, slipper merchants, pocket-book merchants, *et hoc genus omne*, who infest coach offices, to the danger of one's pocket and damage of one's ears.

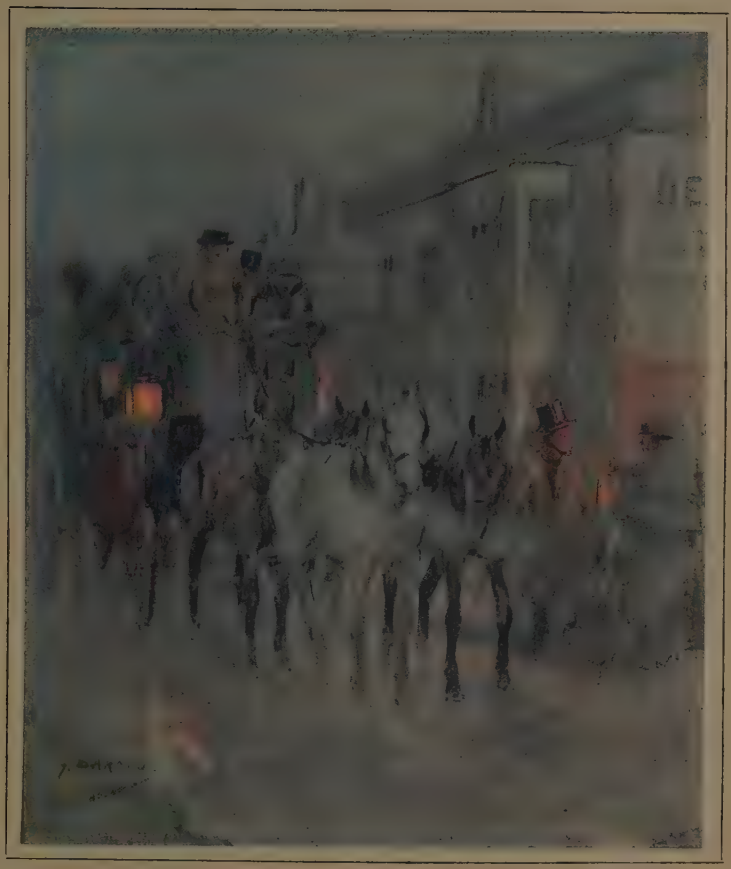
When at length I caught the book-keeper's eye I had the gratification of learning that the

mail was full inside; and at the same moment in walked a porter with a parcel, shaking the sleet off his shoulders, who, on recognising an acquaintance, consoled me by observing to him that though it was coarseish weather just then, he did not think it would last above two or three days!

In my opinion the greatest nuisance after that of preparing a large dinner consisting of all the delicacies of the season (beef *and* mutton, as the sailor said), and at the appointed hour finding no one to eat it, is that of having packed up one's things and made every preparation for a start, and being too late for the coach, or, having taken an outside seat, finding the weather will not allow one to occupy it. The latter appeared likely to be my case; but resolved not to be disappointed, I picked the driest place on the coach, determined to have a ride at all events, if only as far as Maidenhead.

It is impossible to judge what the weather is in the country by what it appears in London. Even those accustomed to it are frequently deceived; and, notwithstanding the guard's and coachman's prognostications of stormy weather, we had not got clear of the smoke before we discovered that it was a fine starlight night. The lights in the shops showed a suspicious dimness upon the windows, which soon proved to be the effects of frost, and we had not proceeded twenty miles before it set in very sharply; and at every succeeding change of horses I heard the keepers flattering the coachman that the roads, which at first had been very heavy, would "soon bear the coach"—agreeable news for a man travelling for the purpose of hunting!

They were not far wrong, however, and ere we



ARRIVAL AT HUNGERFORD; 4 A.M.

had completed fifty miles of the journey the wheels made a very disagreeable noise as they rolled along the road. "I pity the man," says Sterne, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry it is all barren," and so do I; but really when a man travels by night I think he may be allowed to say so; at least I know my journey lacked interest, and at four o'clock in the morning I was heartily glad to find myself shivering at the door of an inn, with my luggage and one of those antediluvian creatures called a watchman for companions. The good-natured soul volunteered his services in waking the ostler, while I made the house resound with the peals of the door bell. Having thawed myself for an hour or two between the blankets, I was disturbed about half-past seven by the entrance of my groom, who, thanks to the united exertions of the old watchman and ostler, had been apprised of my arrival.

The morning was frosty, he said, but he thought we should be able to hunt. The hounds met about eight miles off, and would leave the kennel a little after nine. Having taken my broiled ham and tea on board (the best hunting store in the world), I mounted my horse, intending, with the aid of a few directions from the servant, to find my way to the meet.

I had scarcely cleared the town, however, before I fell in with two horsemen, one (afterwards discovered to be the popular Dr Merrick) whose leg, adorned with sundry bandages, bespoke "the ruling passion strong in pain"; the other, a groom belonging to Mr Pearse, of Chilton Lodge, who, during part of last season, had whipped-in to Mr Smith.

With that *bonhomie*, as the French would call

it, peculiar to fox-hunters, the Doctor and I soon struck up a conversation, and before we got half way to the meet we chatted away as freely as if we had known each other for twenty years, or (after the northern fashion as I am told) had been drunk three times in each other's company; that, or the seven years' acquaintance deemed necessary before one gentleman is privileged to stir another gentleman's fire.

The fixture was East Woodhay, on the west side of Hampshire, where we found the hounds in front of a gentleman's house, attended by a couple of servants, while several horses, whose owners had gone to earth in the mansion, were being led about.

I need scarcely say that I experienced more than ordinary excitement on meeting these hounds for the first time. The Craven had long been familiar to me by reputation, and, like an ardent classic, who after years spent in anticipations and conjectures at length finds himself wandering o'er the regions of his fancy, I found myself conjuring up all sorts of reminiscences of the great master mind who for so many years presided alike over the covers of the manor-house table and the coverts of the Craven Hunt, and forming all sorts of anticipations of the promising sportsman who now fills his place, and whose performance in the field I was that day to witness.

The sporting world has long resounded with the name of Smith, and many persons with the name only at their tongues' ends imagine that the former hero of Leicestershire and the present Master of the Craven are the same person. That there should be two Masters of Fox-hounds of the name of Smith is not at all curious, but that, like Lord Byron's sixteen Browns and eighteen

Smiths, they should also both be "men of pith," and hunt adjoining countries, is perhaps a coincidence worthy of note. Usage has decreed that the Master of the Tidworth Hounds shall be designated Mr Assheton Smith.

It is not my intention, in the course of my tour, to draw those comparisons which Masters of Hounds, in common with the rest of mankind, admit to be invidious; and I only mention the foregoing in order that such of your subscribers as may not be regular fox-hunters may not confound the two Mr Smiths.

Indeed, acting upon the principle I have adopted, I should not introduce the name of a gentleman who keeps a pack of hounds for his own amusement otherwise than in a becoming manner; but so many years have elapsed since Mr Assheton Smith established his character as a sportsman, that no praise can raise it higher, though in what I shall say of his present establishment, I am sure I shall not be accused of fulsome adulation, at least not by those who have seen it.

At present, however, my business lies with the Craven Hounds, twenty couple of which I have been keeping in the cold during this short digression.

We had got as far as the meet, I think. We will now presume lapse of the extra half-hour upon which a man generally reckons when hounds meet before a gentleman's house, that being the time allowed for display of the field to the ladies.

We threw off in a cover close by East Woodhay, which, though it looked very promising, drew blank. One or two others did the same; and we trotted on to one belonging to Mr Sloper, called the Hollies. There is very good laying in this covert, though part of it is very strong (as

I can affirm, having ridden in to see Mr Smith find his fox), and requires a great deal of patience and perseverance to get hounds well through it. Mr Smith is a perfect covert huntsman, patient beyond example, and quick as lightning to a whimper or a challenge. Once into covert, his whole mind seems occupied with his hounds, and I think he as often finds the fox as they do. He seems to know by instinct where they will draw up to him, and his find is joyous in the extreme. Some people may think him long, nay, tedious in his drawing, but that certainly is a fault on the right side, and whatever time may be lost in covert is gained by the expedition with which he gets from one to another.

Twelve o'clock, and yet not a touch of a fox. We were still in the Hollies. A voice from the lane proclaimed the hour, and moved an adjournment to some covert farther off, of course a "sure find," as all coverts are till drawn. A little patch of gorse across the lane remained untouched, and into it Mr Smith threw a few couple of hounds that had left the main covert with him; and in an instant we had a beautiful find.

The fox crossed to the large covert, where the pack joined, and went gallantly away over Coombe Hill by the clumps, keeping straight on the hill-tops till he came opposite the Earl of Carnarvon's at Highclerc. He then descended, and passing through the churchyard he took himself into his lordship's park. Here a momentary check ensued, after a good fifty minutes' burst, and before there was time to make a cast a shrill holloa in a wood close by proclaimed his flight. We went away again at a rattling pace, crossing hills by the grotto (part of the Vine country, I believe), through Crux Easton (part of Mr Assheton Smith's),

where, owing to a flock of sheep, we had another check, but of very short duration, and we again found ourselves in an immense covert, called Doyley, through the whole of which hounds pushed their fox. Unfortunately he headed back, and though they pursued until nightfall, the scent fairly froze before them, and with scarcely a particle left they were obliged to whip off at dusk.

The field was not large in the morning, many having been deterred by the unfavourable appearance of the weather, and our numbers were still further reduced when we came to count noses at Doyley. Though I remember the faces I forget the names of several of the gentlemen who did show at the end. Among the number was the "Master of the Fox," Mr Sloper, who went a merry pace on his brown entire; also that pleasantest of pleasant men, Mr Thomas, with Mr Hillyard, Mr Bacon, Dr Merrick, Mr H. Smith, Mr Villebois (brother to the justly popular Master of the Hampshire Hunt, or *H*upper Hampshire, as the cockney interpreted the H.H. on the button); and though last not least, "Nim South."

I do not forget to place myself, you see, for in a strange country the chances are rather against a man's finding himself up at the end of a good run, and I cannot tell the same tale every day I go out. But, indeed, the country that we went over was nothing very formidable: it resembles Surrey—steep hills, large woods, a few parks, and plenty of flints.

Throughout the run, which I suppose might be an hour and thirty minutes up to the time of the fox heading back in Doyley Wood, the frost had incommoded both hounds and horses, but thenceforward to the time of leaving off it

increased tenfold. Indeed, none but a most persevering sportsman would have gone on under such circumstances, for though he might kill his fox, it was pretty evident there could be no reasonable expectation of further sport. Most of the field had left by half-past three or four o'clock, when I turned my horse's head, as I supposed, towards home. I found, though, by the first mile-stone that I was going to Newbury, so poked my way across the country somehow or other, and got to Hungerford a little after dark.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CRAVEN—*continued.*

THE CRAVEN COUNTRY—THE HUNTING STABLES—MR SMITH'S MANAGEMENT—THE KENNEL—"CHAW-BACON PRIMUS"—HARD FROST AND RETREAT—A SECOND ATTEMPT—A DAY IN MARLBOROUGH FOREST—ANECDOTE OF A YOUNG FARMER—FOREST DESCRIBED—IMMENSE NUMBER OF FOXES BRED ON MARQUIS OF AYLESBURY'S PROPERTY—REPORT OF HIS GIVING FOREST TO ANOTHER HUNT—FORMER MASTERS OF THE CRAVEN—COLD SCENTING COUNTRY—SOME WARM SUPPORTERS—SPORTSMEN IN THE HUNT—MR SMITH AN EXCELLENT ONE—LIFTING HOUNDS—NUMBER OF FOXES KILLED—ANECDOTE OF HIM IN THE HAMBLEDON COUNTRY—MR BUCKERIDGE—HUNT BALLS.

With a pretty good guess as to the probable result, I hung the damp towel out of my bedroom window at night; and oh, great Jove! in what a state I found it! Hard as the flints I had ridden over; like a two-year-old boy, able to stand by itself. Never mind, said I, it is Christmas Day; I will go to church and pray for rain, and who knows but on Monday we may get it. That duty performed, I explored a map of the Craven country, made at the time the Earl of Craven hunted it. The kennel was then at Benham Park, late the residence of the Margravine of Anspach, but Newbury is made the central point in the map, as it includes the country for ten or twelve miles round.

The seats of noblemen and gentlemen, with the names of the then occupiers, are laid down, as well as all the coverts in the hunt, forming a very

useful appendage to an entrance hall, or a sportsman's sanctum. It was made many years ago, and the kennel having been since removed, is, of course, rather out of date; it nevertheless gives a very accurate sketch of the country, and in these days of improvement and lithography, I wonder no artist has been found to speculate in a new one.

As yet I had only seen part of the hounds in the field. I had, therefore, to make my acquaintance with the rest, as also to see the stables, &c. I do not know whence I got the idea, but I always expect that any place designated a "Hall" or "House" is one with a park, which I furnish with old timber and a herd of deer. I was not a little surprised, therefore, to find the "Manor House" an unassuming white-faced building in the main street of Hungerford. The stables, to which I am now going, were built by Mr Warde, and therefore claim a few words. They form two sides of a square, one of which consists of a large twelve-stall stable, the stalls particularly wide, the other being divided into loose-boxes occupied by Mr Smith's hunters. There is no loft above, the main beams of the roof appearing in the stable, and the forage is put into the racks as it is wanted (a custom now generally adopted) instead of standing with the horses breathing upon it all day. Beyond this the stables have nothing particular about them but their coldness, which must at all times be considerable, and on this day was excessive.

Mr Smith is a great advocate for clipping, and has most of his horses clipped, but he never has a rag of clothing upon any of them. There they were, all standing on this particular cold day just as comfortable to feel as mine were with blanket,

sheet, breast-cloth, "night-cap," as the Frenchman called the hood. Nothing like habit! They were eating rich clover hay. It being Christmas Day, as I said before, I thought perhaps the grooms were treating them with a little "plum pudding," but on inquiry I found it was their usual food; and as to working upon it they have not their equals.

In the kennel, which adjoins the stable, I found about seventy couple of hounds, some of which had been out the preceding day. I was attended by the feeder, a Hampshire man who formerly lived with Mr Nicol, the much regretted ex-Master of the Hounds here; and when I tell you that he acquired the name of "Chaw-bacon Primus" when with the New Forest, and brought it with him to the Craven, you will not suppose that he was a man from whom much information was obtainable. Indeed, we could make nothing of each other. "What is the name of this hound?" I inquired. "Therim, sir," said he. "Therim!" said I; "that is an odd name." "Yes, Therim, sir," repeated he with double energy. So I booked him "Therim"; but upon inquiry of Mr Smith, I found his name was Selim. I was more fortunate in a subsequent attempt at getting the name of a very fine young hound, Jason, bred by Mr Codrington, who hunts the southern part of Wiltshire. I think he is the handsomest hound in the pack.

The following day brought with it promise of a confirmed frost. I had exhausted every subject except the kennel, and it was too cold even for that. About twelve o'clock a Bath coach drove up to the Black Bear, into the interior of which I stepped, leaving my clothes and horses in pawn for the bill. Therefore, for one day's hunting I

had the satisfaction of travelling some 120 or 130 miles. But men who hunt about Christmas must expect this. Nothing daunted, on New Year's Eve I again deposited myself on the Bath mail, the day having given symptoms of a thaw; but, *miserabile dictu!* the promise was broken, and before I got to Hungerford I was nearly frozen.

On New Year's Day the frost was still very severe; however, towards the afternoon the sun had gained some influence, and the meet being near (at Thrup, a large cover about three miles from Hungerford), Mr Smith took the hounds out, and I saw him find a fox in capital style. We went out so late that there was not day sufficient to do anything, and after running for an hour or two with a very cold scent, we whipped off at nightfall. On the 3rd we met at Chisbury, on the borders of Marlborough Forest, where we soon found, the fox, of course, taking into the forest. After a ringing run of an hour and a half we killed, and Mr Smith gave the brush to a young farmer whose father occupies a large farm on the borders of the forest. We passed it on a subsequent day. I saw the honest man himself, as also a very pretty daughter. The whole family seem to have a passion for the chase; Mr Smith told me that one day during the last cub-hunting season, a fox having left the forest and taking across a field of standing barley belonging to the farm, he, of course, was going to call his hounds off, when the young farmer interposed, and begged that he would ride through it, adding that he was sure his father would be very much offended if he did not!

Marlborough Forest forms the west side of the Craven country. Of considerable extent, it is an excellent spring and autumn country. The hunt-

ing is somewhat in the style of the New Forest, without fencing, but wanting the large open heaths and commons of the latter. It is the sole property of the Marquis of Aylesbury, one of the great supporters of the hunt. No fewer than twenty-six litter of foxes were bred upon his lordship's property last season.

Since my return into Hampshire on my way to this place, I have heard a report, whether founded or unfounded I do not pretend to say, that his Lordship is about to transfer the hunting of the forest to a neighbouring pack.

It can be of little importance to me personally whether the report be true or not; in all probability I shall never hunt with the Craven Hounds again, and if I should, there will always be sufficient country left; but it is the principle that I look at, and if the Marquis of Aylesbury could only know the honest unprejudiced opinions that I have heard delivered on the subject, he would never think of hazarding his justly acquired popularity by the attempt.

The Craven are a very old-established pack. They take their name from the ancestor of the nobleman of that title, one of the large proprietors on the east side of the country. Lord Craven, I believe, hunted them himself some sixty years ago, the kennel being then, as already said, at Benham Park. After him came Mr Dundas, who was succeeded by Colonel Stead; Mr John Warde followed him, and then Mr Horlock, who hunted the county for only two seasons; then Mr Wyndham, the present Master of the New Forest Hounds, who kept it the same period, and was succeeded by Mr Smith, who has also now completed his second season.

The country, which joins Sir John Cope's, covers

the west side of Berkshire and part of Wiltshire, as far as Marlborough Forest. On the north comes the Hon. Hy. Moreton (the Vale of White Horse Hounds); on the south, the Hon. Newton Fellowes with the Vine Hounds, and Mr Assheton Smith with the Tidworth; so that there is no want of packs, though Marlborough is a better, certainly a pleasanter, quarter than Hungerford; in fact, the latter in appearance does not belie its name, and how the rioters came to select it for their exploits is a mystery. The very name ought to have told them better.

As a hunting country the Craven is below mediocrity. It is hilly, flinty, woody, in short, everything that a country ought not to be; as to scent, the only time it lies well is about half-past six or seven o'clock in the evening. The rioters had deranged the domestic economy of the country to a considerable extent at the time of my visit, and those gentlemen who were not attending the special commissions appointed to try offenders scarcely ventured far from home for fear of hostile visitors in their absence. At a hunt dinner held at Hungerford about Christmas, and generally the best attended in the season, only the Master of the Hounds, one member of the hunt, and a visitor, sat down.

Though a cold scenting country, the Craven possesses many warm supporters, not only among the partakers of the sport, but, to their credit be it told, among the fair sex; and no one is more strenuous or sincere in their exertions than Mrs Wroughton (mother of two excellent sportsmen in the hunt), whose health is drank at the table of every fox-hunter.

Nor does female patronage confine itself to the preservation of foxes, and the exercise of hospi-



F. C. Turner.

The View.

tality. No country in England can produce a finer horsewoman or, I am told, a better rider to hounds than Lady Elizabeth Bruce, youngest daughter of the Marquis of Aylesbury.

The character of the hunt is decidedly sporting. With no want of hard riders every man seems to go out for the legitimate purpose of riding to hounds, and not to try the speed or powers of his horse against those of his neighbours. Few countries can produce bolder riders than the gentlemen I have named, or better than Mr Waddilove, the Bacons, Mr Houblin, Mr Smith of Ramsbury, or Mr Kingsmill; or more determined lovers of the sport than Mr Hillyard, Mr Dundas, Mr Fulwer Fowle, or a dozen others I could name—if I only knew their names.

The sport which Mr Smith has shown since he took the country has rarely been equalled, and it requires no great foresight to predict his early eminence in the sporting world. I went into his country a perfect stranger, and as a stranger have since hunted with all the adjoining packs of hounds; and, apart from my own observation, I find no difference of view respecting his talents. For a man to please every one is beyond the power of human nature, and I am aware that objections have been made to his style of lifting hounds, which they say he practices almost as much as did old Tom Oldaker.

On this point no man who has not hunted hounds in a cold scenting country is competent to give an opinion. Lifting hounds, like everything else, may be carried to excess, and there are days when a fox is better saved than killed; but it is not every man that can lift hounds to advantage during a first or second season in a strange country, to say nothing of the necessity

of his being with them to do it. At all events, even the opponents of the system must allow that Mr Smith is a marvellous hand at killing a fox, and that he often does more towards it than his hounds. He is a rider of uncommon nerve, and they have not yet found anything big enough to stop him from getting to his hounds. He is ably assisted by Charles Treadwell, brother to Mr Codrington's whipper-in, both of whom are very clever fellows. Charles was formerly with Mr Horlock.

On the 6th of April Mr Smith had killed thirty-seven brace and a half of foxes, a number, I believe, wholly unprecedented in the Craven country. He certainly can kill foxes where other men cannot; and it is a well-known fact that the first season he hunted the Hambledon country—in which he commenced his career as a Master of Hounds,—he killed more than double the number killed by two great sportsmen [1] from good scenting countries, who divided a season in it between them.

His taking that country was purely accidental, and the anecdote told of his début as a huntsman may afford encouragement to others in a similar situation.

The huntsman who was with the pack at the time had become somewhat incapable, and day after day the hounds returned bloodless to the kennel. At length Mr Smith, thinking he could do no worse, undertook to hunt them himself, and leaving the old servant at home, went out with only a whipper-in. After drawing several covers unsuccessfully, it was late in the day when a hound challenged, and being joined by the pack, Mr Smith rode on to view the fox away, as he expected, when all at once there was a dead

[1] Sir Bellingham Graham and Squire Osbaldeston: 1821-22.

silence. On getting into the wood he was shocked to find that his hounds had run into a staunch old wether, which they were busy devouring. Having flogged them off, he returned home, where he was accosted by Joe, who, seeing blood upon several of the hounds, thought "Othello's occupation would be gone," and asked what sport they had had. "Oh, we have had blood enough at all events," replied Mr Smith.

I was very unfortunate in my weather during the time I was in the Craven country, it being doubtful each day whether we should be able to hunt on the next. They had been having excellent sport for the few weeks previous to my arrival, and the week before the frost commenced Mr Smith killed five foxes, each of which afforded an excellent run. To kill so many good ones is rather unusual just about Christmas, when, as we all know, they are stronger than at any other time. As a proof that the animal is in better condition, I may mention that the furriers give more money for their skins then than at any other period.

On the 5th of January we met on Hungerford Downs, close to the town; and having no distance to go, of course half the field were late. The morning was raw and foggy; nevertheless there was a tolerable scent, and finding immediately, they were thrown into cover, the hounds went away with only Mr Smith and the first whip, the whole field being left to enjoy a coffee-room. Luckily for us the fox was not a very good one, and what with his ringing and our following the track, we did not ride much above an hour without seeing the hounds.

The only occurrence worthy of note in this day's sport was the appearance in the field of Mr Buckeridge, the celebrated farrier, or cow leech,

of Hungerford. Mr Buckeridge is much above the modern innovations of fashion, and holds the name of "veterinary surgeon" in the most sovereign contempt. They tell a story down there that Sir Francis Burdett once asked him why he did not write "Veterinary Surgeon" above his door, to which he replied, "Poh, veterinary surgeon; it is only another word for 'fool.'"

Among the staunch supporters of the Craven Hunt I omitted to include this worthy baronet. He does not, I believe, hunt with them much; indeed, I rather think his house in Berkshire is let. However, saying that he has property in the county is tantamount to saying that there are foxes upon it, for he is a staunch patron of the chase in every country.

The Craven Hounds hunt four days a week—Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and there is a very good accommodation for man and horse at Mr Hincks's, the Bear Inn, at Hungerford.

The Hunt coat is a plain scarlet with gilt button, with the letters C.C. upon them. The dress coat is also scarlet.

Several Hunt dinners are held in the course of the season in different quarters of the county, and the members, with that gallantry which invariably exists among sportsmen, generally give one or two balls to the ladies. Hunt balls and farmers' cups are excellent means of cultivating or preserving a friendly feeling throughout a county, and the Craven certainly does stand conspicuous as one well-disposed towards hounds, and is a worthy pattern for others in this respect. Where there exists really friendly disposition towards hunting, less damage is always done than in a country partly hostile.

CHAPTER XV.

MR ASSHETON SMITH'S (TIDWORTH).

PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS TO HOUNDS—COLONEL COOKE'S ESTIMATE OF EXPENSES FOR HUNTING A COUNTRY—EXPENSES IN THE TIME OF KING EDWARD I.—VISIT TO MR ASSHETON SMITH'S KENNEL—DICK BURTON—THE HOUNDS—THE STABLES —PREVENTIVE FOR CRIB-BITING.

I WAS glad, Mr Editor, to see that you gave the subscribers to Hunts a touch up about paying their subscriptions. There is nothing like taking the bull by the horns. I am a thorough reformer, and would say, "Disfranchise all those men who put their names down for certain sums, yet never pay a farthing." These are the borough-mongers in the hunt, and, like those in the State, they care nothing about expense; they are, as M'Culloch said of the colonies, a clog round the neck of the master. They are infinitely worse than men who hunt without professing to subscribe, for they induce an expenditure that operates to the disadvantage of a hunt in the same proportion that the sum if paid would operate in its favour. If the funds will not admit of an establishment sufficient to hunt a country four days a week, surely two days are preferable to none; and, indeed, independent of the consideration as to the *argent*, I much question whether, to some countries, it would not be an improvement, and prevent the frequent occurrence of blank days.

I have before me a copy of Colonel Cook's observations upon hunting, open at page 188, where he lays down the expenses of hunting a country twice a week, as follows:—

Six horses, including groom and helpers	£300
Hounds' food, 25 couple	150
Firing	30
Foxes	80
Whipper-in and feeder	140
Earth stopping	50
Saddlery	40
Farriery, shoeing, medicine, &c.	50
Young hounds purchased and expenses at walks	60
Casualties	100
	£1000
A second whipper-in and two horses in addition	170
	£1170

The expenses for three days a week he reckons at £1625, and four days at £1935, exclusive of a huntsman, which he considers would increase expenses by £300. In making his calculation the Colonel had evidently meant that the thing should be done in good style, both master and men well mounted. Indeed, at page 87, he talks of buying half a dozen young horses at a hundred guineas each, adding that if two out of the six turn out well, the buyer ought to be satisfied, as there is every probability of his being able to sell the remaining four for £50 each, barring accidents.

We all know that some men have the happy knack of making sixpence go as far as another man's shilling; but the Colonel had not that

accomplishment, as is evident from his book. Nevertheless, when a man is making an estimate for the guidance of others, it is well to take the outside mark, and there are more Masters of Hounds who exceed than keep within the limit of their averages. However, it is pretty clear that the Colonel was aware of the value of punctual payments of subscription; and one of his observations is, "Should you happen to keep hounds at no great distance from London, you will find many of the inhabitants of that capital (cockneys, if you please) good sportsmen, well mounted, and riding well to hounds. They never interfere with the management of them in the field, contribute regularly to the expense, and pay their subscriptions regularly. The sum of fifty or a hundred pounds is nothing out of an individual's pocket; but to the manager of a subscription pack, the fact of twenty subscribers, each paying his fifty to a day, is a thing of no small consequence, as he is required to pay for almost every article in advance—old oats, hay, meal, &c.—and the interest of the money amounts to one subscription at least."

It is only those who have had experience in the value of punctuality in money matters who can appreciate the importance of regular payments, and I know full well that country gentlemen are frequently just as careless about receiving money as they are about paying it. Having never, perhaps, experienced the benefit of dealing for ready money themselves, of course they cannot understand it where others are concerned. I hunted in a country some years ago in which it *had* been the custom for the managers to take a lease of it, as it were, for three years at a time, receiving the amount of subscription before the commencement of the

first season of each series. There could be no mistake there at all events.

The following was sent to me some time back by a friend, who said he believed it had already appeared in print. It was, however, new to me, and may be to others. The details offer a striking contrast to the Colonel's estimate for a hunting establishment of about five centuries later!

These were the expenses of a Royal Fox-Hunt in the time of Edward the First, translated from a document in the department of the Comptroller of the Wardrobe.

Paid to William de Fox-Hunte, the king's huntsman of foxes in divers forests and parks, for his own wages and the wages of his two boys, to take care of the dogs, from Nov. 20, A.D. 1299, to Nov. 19, A.D. 1300, for each per day twopence	£9	3	0
Paid to the same for the keep of twelve fox dogs, belonging to the king, for the same time, each dog per day one halfpenny . .	9	3	0
Paid to the same, the expense of a horse to carry the nets, from Nov. 20 to the last day of April, 163 days, at threepence per day .	2	0	9
Paid to the same, the expense of a horse, from Sep. 1, on which day the hunting began *after the dead season*, to Nov. 19, at threepence per day	1	0	0
Paid to William de Blatherwyck, huntsman of the king's fox-dogs, for winter shoes for himself and his two boys; to each of them two shillings and fourpence	0	7	0
Paid to the same for his habit during the year	0	13	4
Paid to the same for habits for his two boys .	1	0	0
Total . . .	£23	7	1

Though the items in this are fewer than the Colonel makes, still the two "tottles," as Joe Hume would say, are very different.

After this I arrive at the subject of hunting in the present day, and pray the fairies to transfer my attention to Hungerford, in the west country.

On the 2nd of January, "with the wind at north east, forbiddingly keen," I mounted a hack, and, accompanied by Charles Treadwell, Mr T. Smith's whipper-in, set off on a visit to Mr T. Assheton Smith's kennel at Tidworth, in Hampshire. I am a student of human nature, and a man cannot have a more interesting or more agreeable subject than a huntsman or whipper-in. Sharpness and civility are indispensable qualifications for their work, while constant intercourse with men in a rank of life superior to their own gives a peculiar piquancy and humour to their observations which is not to be found among any other class of men.

Treadwell, as I said in my last, has lived with Mr Horlock, and never missed an opportunity of seeing whatever hounds he could in the neighbourhood of that gentleman's country; consequently he had a good list of pedigrees in his head, and some very extraordinary runs to relate; and, in truth, no man is better qualified to recount the latter, for he is a determined sticker to his hounds. The road, which would otherwise have been tedious, lying over bleak, ploughed, and down country, seemed a mere nothing, and I should have forgotten the whole had it not been that my horse slipped in cantering over a piece of the latter, and we both lay sprawling on the turf.

"It makes all the difference in the world, sir, whether you fall soft or hard," said Charles, as he came up with my horse, which he had caught, and commenced scraping the mud off me.

Arrived at Tidworth, we repaired to the resi-

dence of that paragon of whippers-in, Dick Burton, who we found in *grand costume*, part of which he speedily changed for the scarlet, and appeared, whip in hand, to conduct us to the kennel.

Many men who have not money fancy they could do things very well if they had; while many who have money do them very badly, and think they do them very well because they have never seen them done better; but Mr Assheton Smith has built a kennel which is not to be surpassed for comfort or convenience, in addition to which he has men who know how to profit by the advantages thus afforded, and keep it in proper order. They follow the advice of the poet—

> "O'er all let cleanliness preside, no scraps
> Bestrew the pavement, and no half-picked bone
> To kindle fierce debate, or to disgust
> That nicer sense on which the sportsman's hope
> And all his future triumphs must depend."

In truth, the kennel, like Dick Burton, was the beau-ideal of neatness. I have seen several, but never one equal to it in that respect. It was quite new, to be sure, but it must be under a different administration if it become otherwise. It contains three lofty lodging-houses, with ventilators at top, a separate yard to each in front, and all opening into a common yard behind, where there is a straw-house, servants' room, and a kennel for the bitches in season. On two sides of the feeding-house are drawing-yards, and the boiling-house is through the feeding-house. The whole is well supplied with running water. The yards are flagged, but the floors of the lodging-houses are made of a species of cement, which had given with the frost, and was about to be replaced with flags.

I forget the number of hounds that were in kennel, but should think between sixty and seventy couple. However, I do remember that there were twenty couple and a half of bitches, four couple of which were got by an excellent old black-and-white hound called Watchman. Among the entry of last season were five hounds got by Sir Richard Sutton's Trimmer, out of Rantipole, all very much alike both in shape and colour—pale yellow and white. Rifleman, the biggest of the lot, was about five-and-twenty inches high. Workman, by Watchman, was also a fine hound. I thought the head of General as fine as ever I saw on a hound, but he was rather heavy shouldered. Looking at them in the kennel I preferred the bitches: they seemed a better size, and not so heavy as the dogs, but when we had them all out together it was difficult to say which deserved preference. It was before the frost when I saw them, and they certainly were in splendid condition, and turned out beautifully fine in their coats; but if hounds cannot be kept well in such a kennel as Mr Smith's, I do not know where they can. I understand that most of them were bred by Sir Richard Sutton.

From the kennel I went to the stables, which were also new, in fact not quite finished. They form a square with the entrance from the front; and in the centre is a covered ride, a ring round an engine which supplies the house, kennel, and all the out offices with water. I could not arrive at the particulars of this machine. All the men in the yard could tell me was that they knew when water was wanting in different parts by a mark which pointed to a figure denoting each one, and were placed upon a board by the side. During the riots, some of the mob, bent on destroy-

ing all machinery, wanted to demolish this engine, and were with difficulty persuaded that it was not for the purpose of threshing corn.

Mr Assheton Smith's stables are very large and airy. One of them, I think, would accommodate sixteen or eighteen horses. They have lofts above; but the hay is passed down a covered slide in the wall, and put into the racks below. The mangers are made of blue slate stone from the Master's quarries in Wales, at which the groom told me a horse would not crib bite. He showed me one in the stable then that had given up the trick since the introduction of slate mangers. Beyond these points they differed in no respect from any others; and I think, considering the small field there is for alteration in a stable, there is not much room for improvement.

The house was undergoing a regular reform; and in his anxiety to preserve a favourite room, Mr Smith, I believe, adapted his plan to the case, but unfortunately before the improvements were completed, the old room most ungratefully fell in, leaving the plan in the lurch. Tidworth is a beautiful place; but had I been building, I would have placed the house on the site of the stables. However, *de gustibus*, &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR ASSHETON SMITH'S AND THE HON HENRY MORETON'S (V.W.H.)

A DAY AT SOUTH GROVE WITH THE DOG PACK—GOOD RUN TO TOTTENHAM PARK WITH THE CELEBRATED SOUTH GROVE FOX —MR SMITH'S COUNTRY—JOURNEY TO SWINDON—CROSS-COUNTRY COACH—WILTS AND BERKS RIOTERS—GENERAL POPHAM'S HOUSE—A DAY IN SWINDON BUT NOT WITH HOUNDS —COUNTRY BOOK CLUB—CURIOUS EPITAPHS IN THE CHURCH-YARD—FOOD FOR THE MIND AND BODY—THE BOOK CLUB DINNER—AN EVENING IN THE COMMERCIAL ROOM—A TRAV-ELLER IN THE PAINT LINE—A "PLAIN UNVARNISHED TALE" —A VISIT TO FARRINGDON—THE HON. HENRY MORETON— THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE HOUNDS.

On Tuesday, the 4th of January, I met Mr Assheton Smith's hounds at South Grove, an immense cover formerly belonging to the Craven Hunt, about twelve miles south of Hungerford, as I was told; though, thanks to a dense fog and total ignorance of the road, I made about twenty of it. I thought I never should arrive at the place. I asked the way of every rustic encountered in the uninhabited country, and from their answers it seemed that the farther I went the farther I receded from my destination. One told me it was three miles; the next, four; and a third had the conscience to say it was six; and I had come six miles out of my way. At length I fell in with "the oldest inhabitant," who gave a more encouraging reply; and at

last I found myself on some King's highway, presently to arrive at a toll-bar, through which I espied the hounds in a field.

The dog-pack was out, about thirty couple, attended by Dick Burton, a second whip, and a boy riding Mr Smith's second horse; and a good turn-out it was. The South Grove foxes used to be notorious hangers, and it was a rare occurrence to get one away. Mr Smith hunts it every Tuesday, and his task used to be literally hunting *it*, for I understand the hounds never left the cover the whole day, except now and then when the fox took across a few fields which lie in the centre. They tell a story of Mr Smith going there with two packs of hounds and lighting fires to drive the foxes out, so obstinate were they.

Whether he has them in better order now I cannot say, having only been there once, on which occasion we were lucky enough to hit upon a varmint old fellow who had then beat them several times (and has, I hear, repeated the same trick since) immediately on throwing off. The find was beautiful, and I was delighted with Dick Burton's *screech*, which is the most extraordinary I ever heard, and sounded admirably in the great wood. Mr Smith is most decidedly a sportsman: his seat, his manner of handling his horse, his cheer—his style altogether—are capital. The fox ran the limits of the cover, and crossed the fields once or twice before he broke away, an event most satisfactory to us all, at least those who were in cover, for the drains having been newly cleaned out, and the soil thrown upon the rides naturally of the softest nature, we were riding up to the knees and hocks all the time. Nor was the country we went over much

better: it was chiefly deep ploughed land, added to which there was one of those burning scents often found in foggy weather, which rendered it most advisable to stick close to the hounds. I had not the slightest idea in what direction we were going, whether north, south, east, or west, the fog was so thick. Occasionally I could see Dick Burton on his grey popping over a fence, sometimes Mr Smith on a clipped horse, and sometimes his brother-in-law, Mr Webber, on a white; and having adopted them as pilots, I only looked to Number One. After a good burst we checked in some plantations belonging to Lord Aylesbury, in the Craven Hunt, abounding with foxes. One woodman told me he had seen three on foot. Mr Smith, however, kept on the line of what he considered the hunted fox up to Tottenham Park, when he heard a view-holloa from the house, to which he immediately rode. He had been viewed by some people working in the shrubberies, and having crossed the haw-haw, Mr Smith had some very nice riding over the mossy beds in front of the house. As I saw him trotting over the soft turf I could not help thinking of the story of the gardener who remonstrated with a huntsman for doing the same thing, adding, "Why, my master and mistress never think of riding upon it," to which the former returned the laconic answer, "Bigger fools they."

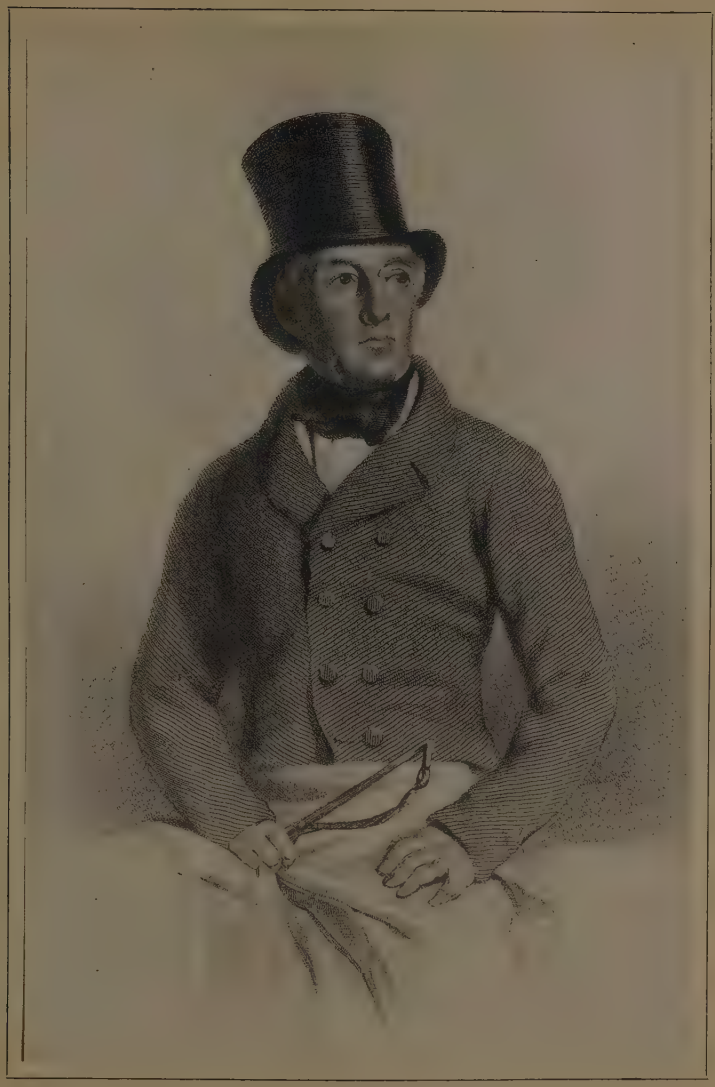
Master Reynard came up the shrubberies again, giving the whole field a view of him, and a very fine fox he was, having a splendid brush with a great deal of white tip. We should undoubtedly have killed had not the laws of a foreign country favoured him, for he went to ground in the Craven Hunt, about a mile or two from Tottenham. A stick would not reach him, and, of course, the

lex talionis, or law of tallyho, prevented digging. Therefore, after sitting like patience in a punt, first looking at the drain, then at the hounds, then at our horses, and then at our watches, all gradually disappeared, leaving the worthy animal to return to South Grove at his leisure.

This, it seems, he did at his earliest convenience, and, after taking his turn on several more Tuesdays, was finally dug on the last day of the season after an excellent run. He was a very extraordinary fox, and seemed as if he had always a comrade waiting to change places with him when he had had enough exercise.

Mr Smith, I learn, concluded a most successful season, having had better sport and killed more foxes than in any former year; and if his old friend at South Grove has only left a few of his own stamp behind, he may look forward to many more. Both his whips are excellent fellows: Burton has long been reckoned the best in England, and it is rather singular that he should have commenced his career with Mr Smith when he hunted the Quorn Hounds, and with whom, if he is wise, he will also finish it; for though it is very true he has always been used to a faster country, yet, if age were to overtake him in such, he might not be fortunate enough to get into a slow one. I must confess he looks rather out of his element in Hampshire, and when we came to talk over Leicestershire matters and his old pack, which I had seen in the autumn, his eyes sparkled with animation. Never mind, Dick, my boy! Leicestershire packs change Masters very often, and "a bird in the hand," &c.; you have got a very snug nest where you are.

Mr Smith's country is of his own making, never having been hunted as a whole before. Part



Thomas Assheton Smith.

From 'Reminiscences of Assheton Smith.' By Sir J. Eardley Wilmot.

used to belong to the Craven. I do not know who, or if any one, hunted the rest. It has great variety, and in many parts is perplexing, both to hounds, horses, and men; and killing nineteen brace of foxes in such a country and under such circumstances is doing great things.

On 6th January I left Hungerford for Swindon, a small town in the north of Wiltshire, between which places there is a cross-country coach three times a week, of which I availed myself, leaving my horses to follow the next day. It was a regular slow six-miles-an-hour concern, but the coachman was a much better stamp of man than one generally finds on cross-roads, and as we had the whole coach to ourselves, we were thrown on our own resources for killing the time. He had been present at all the riots which had taken place at Hungerford and the neighbourhood, and had just returned from Reading, where he had been a principal witness against some of the machine-breakers, who, curious to relate, were no more connected with the classes suffering by the introduction of machinery than I was. On the contrary, one of the leaders of the Ramsbury mob was an iron-founder, a man in a good way of business, and several others were small tradespeople who were not in the least affected by the depression of the times; but it seems that somehow or other they had got it into their heads that we were to have a revolution, when, of course, they would be all dukes and marquesses, and have no more occasion to follow their callings, and the iron-founder had set the noble example of destroying his foundry himself. We passed near the curious old mansion of General Popham, which had been the scene of much confusion during the riots. The General had been obliged

to divide the contents of his larder and beer-cellar among the mob; this, I fear, was done too often, and was the cause of increasing rather than checking the riots, for what could be expected from an ignorant mob acting under the influence of strong beer? Had the gentlemen of the county assembled in the first instance instead of staying at home and temporising with the mob they would soon have quelled the riots.

There is a legend attached to General Popham's house respecting a female who was there confined of a child, to deliver whom a *sage femme*, as the French call them, was introduced into the house blindfold. She, suspecting foul play, contrived to tear off a piece of the bed curtain, which was afterwards produced at the trial when some of the party were indicted for murdering the infant. I forget how the affair resulted, but the story is a good one, especially when told over a blazing fire on a cold December night as I had it.

It was dark long before we got to Swindon, and night brought a sharpish frost, not at all promising as far as sport was concerned. On my arrival I took up my quarters at the Goddard Arms, and having dined, or rather supped, and been serenaded for an hour or two by a band of country musicians, whose fingers must have been impervious to the cold, I retired to bed.

In a strange place where one has nothing to do it is advisable to spend as much of the morning as possible in bed, for there are never lions enough to last above an hour or thereabout, even though the attractions include a coach or two changing horses. It was, therefore, somewhat late before I found my way downstairs to breakfast. They had changed my room, not at all unusual treatment of those who travel outside a coach. I

have made the grand tour of all the sitting-rooms in more than one large hotel in my life. On this occasion I was ushered into an apartment on the floor of which stood two large clothes-baskets full of books. Thinks I they have already found out that I am the "book man," as Colonel Jolliffe's huntsman called me, and have sent some food for the mind; but I was presently undeceived by the entrance of two rural footmen, grooms or gardeners, who set to arranging them on a table, murdering their titles in the most barbarous manner. It was the day for the annual sale of books belonging to one of those agreeable societies so general in the country called Book Clubs; and there were all the new publications of the day—novels, romances, travels, reviews, and magazines. There was only one magazine wanting—viz., a sporting one, a deficiency which, however, I am sure will be supplied before another sale. After breakfast, by a natural sort of instinct, I found myself wandering, hands in pockets, into the stable yard; but recollecting there was nothing in it belonging to me, I retraced my steps, and, wandering down the street, found myself in the churchyard. The tombstones abound with original epitaphs, and if they speak truth, which some, Lord Byron amongst the number, have doubted, there must be some very righteous people buried in Swindon Churchyard. The following is a humble unassuming piece of composition:—

"Blush not, O tomb, to rescue from oblivion the humble name of Roger Coale, who, by the blessed order of Divine Providence, first drew the vital air on Wednesday, January 14, 17—, and carefully laboured under the different toils and troubles of life till Monday, the 31st day of March, 18—, when he summed up the same with a faithful reliance

on the mercy of Almighty God, softly sighing out his soul, and with cheerfulness resigned it into the hands of his blessed Redeemer."

Poor Roger! as you lived, so you died. But what a warning to fox-hunters do the following lines on the tombstone of Anthony Jones, jun., afford:—

"When I was a young man, fresh and gay,
Death in haste took me away,
I with a fall received a wound
That brought my body to the ground."

Alas! poor Anthony Jones, jun. I fear you did not look before you leaped.

Swindon is a nice, cheerful, healthy place, about the size of Melton, and the houses have a good deal of the Leicestershire cut about them: red sides and blue tops. It stands high, but is tolerably sheltered, and there is a canal within a mile of it. As a hunting quarter it is hardly central enough, the nearest kennel being at Farringdon, ten miles off. People who do not mind distance can, however, reach three or four packs.

Nothing in England has the slightest chance of prospering unless it be commenced or accompanied by a dinner. There must be the "nourishment"; and the members of the Swindon Book Club having disposed of their food for the mind in the morning, about five o'clock in the afternoon began to think about that for their bodies. The consequence was that I again changed my room, and was ushered into what is called the "Commercial," which happened at that time to be empty. I was not aware of its identity until about an hour after dinner, when I had finished my wine, and was dozing over a well-thumbed

novel from the "Ebers's" of Swindon. A young man entered with a gig-whip in one hand and a box-coat in the other. Supposing him to be one of those who had attended the "book dinner," I made him a bow, which he returned; and, having discharged his burthen, he drew his chair to the fire and commenced a conversation on the weather (it being a bitter frost), and informed me that he had come from Oxford that day. His manner was easy without anything of freedom about it, and I was at a loss to make out what he could be, until, looking at my novel, he observed that he wished he had time to read, adding that he had as much writing as would keep him at work until twelve o'clock; and just as he said this in came the gig-seat, which being opened turned into a writing-desk.

It was evident that he was a commercial gentleman, and he, finding me in that room, of course supposed I was one also; and as I did not think it worth while undeceiving him, we had a long discussion on the state of trade. He was travelling for a large oil and colour house at Bath, and about an hour after his arrival, having assembled several of his customers, he unfolded "a plain unvarnished tale" respecting the price of blubber and paint, while they sat *bouche ouvert*, as the French say, washing down what he said with large potations of blue ruin. Train-oil was very dear, he said: it had risen nearly double in consequence of the loss of some Greenland whalers; black paint was the nineteenth part of a farthing a pound cheaper, and so was green; the rest were all the same as on his last visit. The subject of credit was next introduced, and then that of the cheap shops in the country, the owners of which, he stated, in many cases actually sold

under prime cost, leaving the wholesale supplier very little chance of being paid. Indeed I was getting quite knowing in the trade, when my groom, George Bushe, entered the room, desiring to know what time he should start with my horse to cover in the morning, thereby letting the cat out of the bag; and recognising that my presence was an interruption to business, I retired to my couch.

The following day, Saturday, there was not the remotest possibility of hunting; the frost during the night had been most severe, and the windows of my bedroom were tastefully decorated. To spend two days in a country town is too much of a good thing; therefore in the middle of the second I mounted my horse, and what with walking, slipping, and sliding, arrived safely at Farringdon, where I inspected the hounds in kennel.

The past season was Mr Moreton's first for hunting a country, and as he had to make a pack from drafts, the task was more than many men durst undertake. To say that he did it well would not be saying half enough, for he did it wonderfully well.

None, save those who have tried it, know the trouble and difficulty attendant upon making a pack from drafts, and no man who can buy one ready made ought to trouble himself with the endeavour. To be sure some men like it. Lord Middleton in his seventieth year set to with all the energy of a youth of twenty and made one. Beside having a pack to form Mr Moreton had also a kennel to form, Lord Kintore's having been at Wadley House when he hunted the country. The present one is in a field close by the town of Farringdon, and, with nothing of the magnifi-

cent about it, answers the purpose very well, and may be reconverted to its old use as a cow-house or stable at very little expense. The only thing that struck me was there did not seem to be any *servants' kennel* attached. I rode about and about and might have ridden off with all the hounds if they would have followed me before any one interfered. However, there is no fear of a man stealing a pack of hounds nowadays, I think. I had scarcely succeeded in procuring a man to take charge of my horse before I saw a gentleman in white shorts and continuations, with a lady on each arm, making for the kennel.

Having met Lord Ducie and a younger brother of Mr Moreton's when hunting in Sussex the season before last with Colonel Wyndham's hounds, I at once recognised the Master of the Vale of White Horse pack by the likeness, and, having informed him of the object of my visit, found he had come to show his hounds to the ladies; consequently we had the whole pack turned out into the field. A lot of great tearing fox-hounds is not to a lady's taste, especially when seen at close quarters. A similar number of Italian greyhounds or King Charles lap-dogs would be much more in their way; and Mr Moreton's fair friends, having speedily satisfied their curiosity, perhaps a little hastened by the cold in their "feet-fingers," as the Countess de G—— called her toes, took their departure, leaving me to make my observations alone. It is not fair to look too critically at an establishment quite in its infancy, and on this very day seven couples of hounds had arrived from Mr Horlock who, it will be remembered, purchased Mr Warde's hounds: and there were several other recent additions, many of which may be in other kennels by this time.

Of the dogs I liked best Traveller and Fairplay —to be sure they have crooked legs, but they can get away with them nevertheless; Myrtle is a pretty bitch, and so is Jessamine; Singer, a two-season hunter, is also a neat hound. They looked fifty times better in the field than in kennel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HON. HENRY MORETON'S (V.W.H.)—*continued.*

VISIT TO WROUGHTON—THE SHOWER-BATH IN CHURCH—"A MAN WOT KNOWED EVERYTHING"—A COLD DAY AT COLD HARBOUR WITH MR MORETON'S HOUNDS—A SUSPICIOUS FIND—A START FOR THE BRUSH—A REVEREND WHIPPER-IN TAKES A COLD BATH—SHREWDNESS OF THE SEX—THE "BOOK MAN" DETECTED—A DAY AT ASHDOWN PARK—SNOOKES'S CAP—A DAY WITHOUT HOUNDS AT GREAT WOOD—THE BOROUGH OF WOOTTON BASSETT—A GREAT BLANK AT DRIFFIELD—A LATE FIND IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND FINISH IN THE DARK.

I LEFT the Farringdon kennel with the firm conviction that I should not see hounds again for a month. The wind was due east, and the noonday sun had scarcely any influence on the frost. Indeed so settled did the weather appear that, riding back to Swindon, I almost made up my mind to go on to Hungerford and take coach home, giving up the prospect of hunting as hopeless. On my arrival at the former place I found, muffled up in a regular great winter coat, with the word "frost" strongly depicted in his countenance, my friend Mr Robert Codrington, who, when I met him with Mr Assheton Smith's hounds a few days before, had been kind enough to engage me to dine at Wroughton on this day should I arrive in time. This was better than going to Hungerford, especially as Sunday would intervene, and might bring milder weather.

Wroughton is as good a name in the Vale country as it is in the Craven, only in the latter it is the proper name of a person, and in the other the name of a place—viz., the mansion of Mrs Codrington, the mother of more real sportsmen than I ever knew in one family, she having five sons who hunt the fox. The eldest, I need scarcely say, is the owner of one of the best packs in England, and has long hunted parts of Wiltshire. The house, one of the old-fashioned comfortable sort, stands high, and commands a very extensive view over a fine hunting country. Besides this it has the great recommendation of being a thoroughly hospitable mansion, the very place for a fox-hunter: no fuss, no ceremony, every one doing just as he likes—in fact, it is one of the few houses where a stranger finds himself at home in less than half an hour. After all is said and done, this is the true enjoyment of life, surpassing immeasurably the cold courtly reception one meets with in the fashionable world, where all is vanity and vexation of spirit. I would rather dine off a beef-steak with a sportsman than banquet on ortolans or the swollen livers of geese with an emperor. But to the tour.

Sunday, the 9th of January, still a severe frost. The morning did not hold out the slightest prospect of a change. Of course, as in all well-conducted mansions, the inhabitants went to church, which was somewhat more than ordinarily cold. Mrs Codrington's pew is in the chancel, and it was tolerably well filled, what with her own family and visitors; and we were all listening devoutly to the sermon when a large drop of water came down from the roof with a splash upon the bald head of one of the party, causing

general consternation, the sportsmen thinking it a favourable omen for their hunting, the ladies thinking it very unfavourable for their bonnets. The first drop was speedily followed by a second, then a third, and at last it came down shower-bath fashion, and we decided that hunting was a certainty. On making our exit, however, we found that the drips had been caused more by the heat arising from the congregation than any great change in the weather, though the wind certainly had chopped round a little.

The afternoon, of course, was chiefly passed in the different stables, hearing each owner extol the qualities of his nags; and, the weather promising fair for hunting the next day, in ordering their "Surreys to be saddled for the field." Mr Robert Codrington and I walked over to Swindon to do a little Bond Street, and for me to give orders about my horses, which latter I could not do, as we did not know where the hounds were to meet. It is a very common thing for people at the seaside to get their fish from London, and I really think they often get the news of their own immediate neighbourhood from the same place. We asked every landlord and every ostler in Swindon where Mr Moreton's hounds met next day, but not a soul could tell. The country paper was gone a-visiting, and we were nearly giving it up when a youth entered the room and said that he would go and seek Tom Somebody, "a man wot knowed everything." The jockey came, and he answered the description. He looked just the sort of man "wot would know everything." Of course he was lame, wore top-boots and a Belcher tie. A man of information, he told us not only the meet for the next day,

but those for the week or two following, all of which he had carefully culled from Bell's 'Life in London.'

Monday morning appeared but doubtful. Nevertheless five red-coats came to the breakfast-table in tolerable time; and considering the delays which generally take place, each man relying upon his neighbour for getting away punctually, we made a fair start, and the distance not being great rode our hunters to cover. The meet was at a public-house; I do not know whether the sign was "Cold Harbour," nor how the painter would depict it, but the place was certainly called so, and very appropriate the name was. The hounds had come, and with them Jim Somebody from the Duke of Beaufort's. That paragon of men and beau-ideal of whips, the Right Rev. Dr Snookes, and a young lad, riding Mr Moreton's horse, were *skating* about a field before the public-house. The field that came to meet them was small indeed, consisting only of Mr Calley, the Wroughton party in scarlet, and some five or six others in blues and blacks. Rather a curious thing happened this morning. Mr Moreton was somewhat late, it being past eleven before he made his appearance; and no sooner had he mounted his hunter than a deafening tallyho was heard within a hundred yards of where we were standing. It was repeated several times in the same stentorian tone; and, riding forward, we saw a great buffer in waggoner's frock, hat in hand, shouting as if he had seen the devil. "Hold your tongue," cried one. "What are you making such a noise about, you fool," cried another. "D——n you, hold your tongue," bellowed a third. But it was of no use: he holloaed as if his life depended upon the noise he made. Having got the hounds

to the place, they took up the scent, and we all made ready for the fight. There was, however, more cry than wool, or rather more cry than fox, for somehow or other the hounds could make nothing of it, which, together with the suspicious nature of the find, made Mr Moreton suspect that the natives had kept a bagman ready to turn down the moment he should arrive. Consequently after a fruitless cast, he gave it up, and went to a favourite cover, called, I believe, Water Eton, but I do not know whether that be the way to spell it.

Here we had a beautiful find in a gorse at the extremity of the wood; and, considering the dangerous state of the ground for riding, Mr Moreton got his hounds well away with their fox. The field had increased considerably by this time, but the majority preferred the roads, only three coming to the scratch to ride across country. Of these, of course, Mr Moreton was one; the others were Mr John and Mr Robert Codrington, and I think the start they made was as good a thing as ever I saw, the horses slipping and floundering about at every step. Parson Snookes brought up the rear like a good whipper-in; but, miserable to relate, the reverend gentleman soon found himself reposing in a cold bath in a muddy ditch. But Snookes, though not much given to the over-free use of water, does not mind a little occasionally.

We lost this fox somewhere near Cold Harbour after a quarter of an hour's scurry, or rather skate, for those who rode to hounds; and after casting in all directions we gave it up as a bad, not a *bag*, bargain. We tried for another in a very sporting cover called Tadpole, which I was told seldom or never denies a reynard when properly requested. Mr Ward, one of the Wroughton

party, and myself followed the field at some distance, and we met a countryman who informed us that he had seen a travelling fox about ten o'clock in the morning going in the direction of Cold Harbour, which doubtless was the gentleman we had started with. We found again very soon, but everything was against hunting, and the day ended bloodless in a gentleman's park about three or four miles from Swindon.

A thing happened on this day worthy of mention as showing the shrewdness of the sex compared to that of men. As I was out for the sake of hunting, and publication of my tour was then very doubtful, I did not conceive it necessary to placard myself as a scribbler; therefore I left people to find it out as they could—never telling them—at the same time not denying it when asked.

Having hunted with or seen many of the packs in England, and scribbled a good deal, it follows that several people, particularly huntsmen, feeders, &c., have been rather surprised to see accounts of themselves and hounds in print; but the most absurd thing is, though none of them ever suspect it at the time, yet there is not a chaw-bacon north, south, east, or west but swears on seeing or hearing what is said, and connecting it with my visit, that he thought I looked like a "magazine gentleman" or "book man," *homme de lettres*, as the French say. In fact, just as all the onlookers knew how to make the egg stand on end after Columbus had shown how to do it, they all knew me.

On this morning I observed whispering and pointing among the few people assembled in the field at Cold Harbour—the sort of notice that a government clerk attracts as he issues from his

Downing Street office, full fig with a statesmanlike air, and a quill up his collar, put there by some malicious wag to destroy the effect. Supposing it might be the usual sensation caused by the appearance of a stranger, I thought nothing of it until about the middle of the day, when, as I was riding along one side of a hedge, Mr Ward, who was on the other, called that he had heard a story of me, and though we did not get to each other for half an hour, I could have told him what it was that instant. Whence he got his information I could not divine. It seems that the curiosity of a farmer had been excited, and, pointing me out to Mr Ward, he inquired if I was not the "magazine gentleman." Mr Ward, being perfectly ignorant of the fact, of course replied in the negative. The conversation was resumed after dinner at Wroughton, and Mr Robert Codrington let out the secret, telling me that the ladies whom I had seen in the kennel had observed me buying a small memorandum or betting book on my way through Farringdon; and, of course, a man buying a book must be "a book man"—I might have bought all the books in that parish, and those adjoining too, before a man would have detected me.

> "Women with quick discerning eye,
> Can truths and subtleties espy,
> From grosser optics hid."

These were not hunting ladies; at least I did not hear of their appearance in the field, though I saw by the papers that they figured in the gallope at the hunt ball given at Wadley House shortly after I left the country. Some of the members of the hunt were good enough to invite me to attend it, and I much regret that it was

not in my power to avail myself of the invitation. I suspect my fair friends have changed their names since then; if they have not, they must either be very hard-hearted or the taste of the country is sadly deficient.

The 11th of January, still a hard frost. Hounds met at Ashdown Park, a name dear to coursers, and a queer-looking place it is. The house, which is a lofty, square, Frenchified-looking mansion, stands in the middle of a long slip of wood, with straight avenues in all directions leading to it; and the surrounding country being completely open, without another cover for several miles, if a fox goes away a run is a sure thing.

This being the case, Ashdown Park is, of course, a very favourite meet; and though the day was most forbiddingly cold, we mustered very strong at the cover side—so strong, indeed, and so scattered that we had considerable difficulty in finding our horses, and I began to think that Mr R. Codrington, who had mounted me to cover, would have to stand mount for the day, when luckily I discovered my groom. He had been hunting me, but the scent had not lain well, I suppose.

Whether it arose from the disturbance in the cover prior to the hounds throwing off, or that the foxes really do not use it, or that the keepers do not patronise them, I cannot say; but I am inclined to think the first was the case; at least I know if I were a fox I would live in Ashdown Park and take care of the fine rattling hares I saw leaving it in all directions. The property belongs to Lord Craven, I believe, but the house seems to have been shut up for years, and does not look a very tempting abode—in winter at all events.

Having satisfied himself that there was no fox that day, Mr Moreton proceeded to a gorse cover several miles off, but in what direction I have no idea. The only thing I remember is that the Rev. Mr Snookes's horse began jumping about with him, and having chucked his rider's cap off, jumped out of the gorse, leaving it there without any clue to the spot. Snookes is naturally of a frigid appearance almost equal to that of a Russian horn-blower, and was now rendered more so by the loss of his cap; yet there he sat bare-headed, the whole cover resounding with laughter, his hand in his breeches pocket, with all the coolness of a crocodile.

The betting was five to two against his finding his cap again; but mark the sagacity of the man. Independently of partaking somewhat of the nature of an onion—viz., the more you peeled him the more he would stink (excuse the word)—he had long kept up a system of eating the tongues of all the foxes killed; and what with this and handling them to cut off their brushes, pads, &c., he was almost as *strong* as a fox himself; so, taking advantage of the circumstance, he got a few couple of hounds together and threw them into the part of the cover where he had lost his thatch. They soon gave tongue, and old Snookes ran into his cap. This was "a cap" extra for him.

About half-past three we (that is, the Wroughton party) voted it a blank, and got under way for home; and dinner, as is frequently the case, was the best sight of the day.

On the 12th Mr John Codrington, Mr R. Codrington, and myself went to meet Mr Horlock's hounds at Great Wood, some eight or nine miles from Wroughton, being, as its name bespeaks, a large cover of some two or three hundred acres

belonging to Lord Holland. What might have been the result of this day's sport must remain *in nubibus*, for, as luck would have it, the hounds never came; and after half an hour's conversation with some labourers, and hearing from the keeper that he had received no notice of an intended visit from the hounds, Mr J. Codrington returned home, and Mr R. Codrington and I rode round by the immaculate borough of Wootton Bassett. In justice to Mr Horlock, I should, however, observe that the preceding day had given so little prospect of hunting on the morrow that he was perfectly justified in not sending his hounds to lay out overnight, as they always do when they hunt this cover, and we scarcely reckoned upon finding them. Nevertheless, I was disappointed, for I had a great desire to see hounds the breed of Mr John Warde, from whom they were purchased when he gave up hunting. Moreover, it was a nice-looking cover, barring a very nasty, broad, bottomless brook at one end, across which the fox generally thinks right to steer, to the great discomfiture of the field. It was also a better hunting day than any we had had for some time.

The only thing worthy of mention at Wootton Bassett, other than the purity of the electors, is the purity of a great horse-pond, which stands in the middle of the village or borough, and through which refractory burgesses are drawn until their eyes are opened to a proper sense of the merits of the candidates. In fact, nothing can be more impartial or fair than a contested election there; every man does just as he likes, but if he does not do what the rest like, they make him.

The following day, Thursday, 13th January,

like the Derby at Epsom or the Cup at Ascot, it was predetermined should be a good day with Mr Moreton's hounds, and great was the conversation thereon. The meet was Driffield Gorse, one of the most favourite in the hunt, and a reputed sure find: the deuce of a way from Farringdon, but as love laughs at locksmiths, so fox-hunters laugh at distance; and having despatched our horses early in the morning, I set off on the Wroughton butcher's pony, a wonderful animal for six miles an hour, with Mr R. Codrington as pilot. After describing several mathematical figures by the road and going in all sorts of directions, we came upon a high road, and saw, as far as a thick mist would allow, some horsemen ahead. These, instead of stopping at the farmhouse, went right on through the cover and into a field at the high end. We did the same, and I think I may safely say that before the hounds came, every part of the cover had been disturbed by foot people or horsemen. There was a tremendous muster of the former, and in several parts where the gorse had been cut an ocean of faces was packed as close as in a one-shilling gallery when the celebrated 'Dog of Montargis,' 'Napoleon Buonaparte,' or any other *legitimate* drama is performed. It was the most disorderly scene I ever witnessed at a cover side. Only the heir at law to Job could stand such doings; half the Masters of Hounds in England would have gone home at once. I need scarcely add that this "sure find" drew blank: not all Mr Moreton's holloa's, Jim's "Yoicks, push him up!" Snookes's cracks, or the boy's flourishes could make a fox where no fox was. It was the old story of *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and as a necessary consequence we had to go to another cover several miles off,

which bore a very bad character. This it fully maintained. Indeed there was scarcely any lying for a fox, and it was not worthy the name of a cover.

We again made a forced march for several miles in another direction, and passed through Bibury. About three o'clock in the afternoon we found in Lea Wood, and went away at a rattling pace for several miles—in the direction of Lechlade, I believe. At all events we got among the stone walls. Suffice it to say that we went over a great deal of arable land, over several fences, some of which had ditches on both sides, others with only one, and some with none at all; that the hounds went as hounds should go, so did the horses, ditto the riders; that about the middle of the run we came to a check, which, lasting some time, the Codringtons and myself were about to go home, when suddenly they hit off the scent; and as no man can leave hounds running merely for his dinner, we did not go, and at dark found ourselves in a grass field—hounds whipped off, Mr Moreton blowing his horn to get up the stragglers—with the two Mr Mills, Mr Bosanquet, ourselves, and one or two others forming a ring, discussing the false holloa which had lost us our fox.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE V.W.H. AND CRAVEN.

A GOOD SAMARITAN—A SUPERIOR *SCHNEIDER*—MR MORETON'S COUNTRY—HIS OMNIBUS FOR HOUNDS—A SPORTING PARSON—MR ROBINS—A DAY AT AUBORNE CHASE WITH THE CRAVEN—A GENUINE SNOWSTORM—A THAW—THE FIRST HUNTING DAY AFTER A THAW—JOURNEY TO READING BY A NIGHT-COACH—AN INDEPENDENT COACHMAN.

Our horses had been on their legs since six in the morning, and how to get them home by the weary turnpike roads, for we durst not attempt cross-country lanes in the dark, was the next consideration; however, in the midst of our debate, Mr Bosanquet acted the part of the good Samaritan, and did the rashest act of which a married man can possibly be guilty. He asked three ravenous fox-hunters to join himself and wife at the family dinner; and not only to dine but stay all night. Necessity knows no law, and had it not been for the hospitable welcome we received from his charming wife, I should be almost ashamed to confess that we closed with the offer. We were not many miles from his house at the time, and leaving us to follow at our leisure, he rode forward to make such additions to the dinner as the case seemed to require; and, in truth, I was so hungry I could have eaten a hippopotamus. We had been in Gloucestershire, I believe, most of the day, and

having placed our horses under the care of some Lancers who were stationed in the neighbourhood to protect the machinery, arrived at Fairford Lodge, the then residence of Mr Bosanquet, about seven o'clock.

It now occurred to us that we had no clothes; the dirty things we had been splashing about in all day would be bad enough at a men's dinner, and quite impossible to appear in before a lady. This, however, Mr Bosanquet remedied; and as they say a well-made London coat will fit anybody, so I should think our host must employ a very scientific *schneider* for his trousers; we each took a pair of white ones, and notwithstanding the disparity of size, one of the party being a foot and a half taller than another, we turned out uncommonly smart in these and our red coats. To be sure, at first sight I was rather apprehensive that one of the party would have slipped through his borrowing, but the evening passed without any accident, and we retired to rest at an early hour, heartily thankful for the nourishment we had received. Of course, on the following day we had to ride home in our previous day's costume, and as we passed through the country the natives came out expecting to see the hounds. We kept up the delusion by inquiring about them, and one great gaping girl, who came to a farmhouse door, being asked if she had seen the fox, replied, "No, sir, but I have seen a har" (hare).

Before I take leave of Mr Moreton's hounds, at least for the present, I must pay him the compliment, which I dare say he will not value, of saying that he is a very superior sportsman, and does the thing in the most liberal and gentlemanly style. He is capitally mounted, an excellent rider to hounds, and proves himself a good

sportsman by leaving his hounds alone at check, instead of laying hold of them immediately. In the hunting he is ably assisted by Hill (Jim, I believe); and as to second whips, I will be bound for it there is not such another as Snookes under the sun—I do not say in what respect. It is a good scenting country, chiefly grass, with moderate fences, but somewhat cut up by canals. The great objection to it is that it is a *canal* of a country, being forty-five miles in length, and only twelve or fourteen in breadth. On the north and north-east comes the Duke of Beaufort's country, Mr Drake's on the east, the Craven on the south, and Mr Horlock's on the west. It is among the countries which have been longest hunted in England. The "Adam" was, I believe, a gentleman of the name of Loder, after whom came Mr Symonds, then Mr Codrington, who hunted it eleven years, and was succeeded by Mr Harvey Combe, who hunted it alternately with the Berkeley country for three seasons; Lord Kintore had it the same period, and was succeeded by Mr Moreton, who I hope will hunt it for ever and a day longer. The covers, though small, are somewhat far apart; to remedy which, or rather the distance of many of them from the kennel, Mr Moreton has an omnibus to carry the hounds to the meet, something similar to that Lord Southampton had in the Quorn country, and which waits near the likeliest place for them to leave off. On the day I have last described it was stationed at Lechlade or Fairford; and the omnibus with the hounds came rattling past us with their four horses, two post-boys, and lamps lit, as we jogged on to Mr Bosanquet's.

The foxes in the country are well preserved, and Mr Moreton's popularity will ensure a con-

tinuation of this. I think he had killed either twenty or two-and-twenty brace before Christmas, and thirty-five brace and a half in the whole season. This is good work for a first season with a draft pack! There are some capital sportsmen in the Hunt, and among the number is a black coat, who can show most of the red the way. Though, like the Bishop of ——, I do not disapprove of parsons hunting, provided, of course, as he said, that "they don't holloa," yet I think it may be as well not to mention the names of their reverences.

One thing struck me on the day we met at Driffield—viz., that there were more farmers out than in any other country I visited last season. Of course Mr Robins was out, and a capital pilot he is across a country. Finding that I return to Wroughton every night, when possible, after the day's sport, it may be thought I have taken up my abode there for good, and in truth it looked somewhat like it, for having first gone there to dine and then established a bed, I next brought my horses, so that we were all very snug and comfortable. But the best of friends must part, and though I had invitations in the county enough to last out the season, I was obliged to strike my tent on the 15th. Before I go, however, let me make my acknowledgments for the hospitality I received, and express my gratitude.

The spirit of hospitality in general life may prevail to a greater degree in one district than another, but among fox-hunters it is the same in all counties, and can only be understood and appreciated by men of similar habits. It is not of that transient or effervescent nature which dies on the retirement of the object or the decline of the novelty, but it is a steady quiet friendship

which cherishes an interest in absence, and delights in secret acts of kindness.

On 15th January I left Wroughton for Hungerford, meeting the Craven Hounds at Auborne Chase, a large cover on the top of an exceedingly high hill. It was a bitter hard frost, the ground was perfectly impenetrable, and the day most forbidding. Nevertheless, Mr Smith was punctual, and threw off at the usual hour to a very small field, soon rendered still smaller by a very dense fog. He found, and the hounds were out of sight in an instant; those who rode, rode at the extreme hazard of their necks. I saw one gentleman's horse run away with him, and presently it slipped up and, getting clear of the rider, went off in an open country to take a day's hunting on its own account. In this it was baulked, for the rider had taken the precaution of writing his name upon the saddle; consequently, when he was caught there was nothing to do but take him to the owner. I know nothing of what took place on this day, save from report; I believe they left off in Marlborough Forest, at least so I was told by a Bath coachman who had seen them as he passed through. I left my horses to rest a little at Hungerford, and fell back on Reading for headquarters. They did so, but ere I had again an opportunity of exercising them, came the winter of our discontent, a snowstorm, particularly severe in the West of England. It almost stopped communication by coach; no fewer than seven were snowed up fast on Marlborough Downs on the 2nd of February.

This was a most proper snowstorm, not one of your puny things—so many inches or so many feet; for here they disdained mention of anything under a yard. It was not without its ad-

vantages, however, either from an agricultural or hunting point of view, for many stables were pretty well done up; as to scent after it was gone, there never were such times,—it was the death of many a good horse. But enough for the day is the evil thereof.

> "And see where surly winter passes off
> Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts;
> His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
> The shatter'd forest, and the ravag'd vale;
> While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
> Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost."

Thus it was on the 8th February, when, after the pitiless raging snowstorm, the "ruffian blasts" suddenly subsided, and the dawn of spring cheered the eyes of the anxious sportsman. All nature seemed refreshed. The looked-for, dreaded storm was past, the course of nature was fulfilled, and ample time remained for the vigorous prosecution of sport.

The finest part of the hunting season, to my mind, is that immediately following a severe snowstorm—provided it has not lasted beyond a reasonable time. On referring to my journal of the season before last, I find that in the county in which I was then hunting—viz., Sussex, from the 24th of December to the 11th of February, with the exception of one solitary half-bred sort of day on which the ground was partially covered with snow, I never saw hounds. This, too, in the immediate neighbourhood of the sea where, if hunting is possible anywhere, it may be expected. Last season, a month's interregnum of frost and snow is, I think, the most any historian will have to record. In the West of England a much shorter period may be fixed. I hunted on the 15th of January, and again on the 11th



James Pollard.

Mail Coach in Snowdrift.

of February, though many packs commenced several days before, and continued at work for several days after the dates named. Taking it therefore as a whole, I should say that there was no great fault to find with the season; November and the greater part of February were excellent hunting months, and the interruption caused by the storm only made one return with redoubled zest on the first prospect of an open day. With what rapturous delight does the sportsman behold himself again accoutred for the chase, after a long cessation caused by weather! It is infinitely superior to the feeling experienced on the first day of the season, when every one feels awkward and *distrait*, when the very fences look green, and gentlemen yield the *pas* with as much ceremony, though with more warmth, than at the courts of kings. Now they meet upon different terms. The calculation of the strength of the stable and the husbanding of the horse's powers are forgotten, the limits of the season are defined, and each man determines to have as much hunting as possible; in fact, to go as long as he can, bearing in mind the advantages to be derived by early application to the nice spring grass, should he unfortunately take more out of his nags than prudence would dictate.

With this feeling, I no sooner saw the drenching rain banish the snow than I addressed a letter to my factotum at Reading, desiring him to forward me the meets of Sir John Cope's hounds, and bidding him expect me by the mail on the following night. However, on applying at the coach-office for a seat, I found they would not book me for a shorter distance than Hungerford, consequently I departed from my usual custom, and took a place on a heavy Bristol night-coach—

name unknown, but which, I think, might with propriety be called the "Independent," for they seemed bound neither by law nor hours; the coach a species of caravan—with the driver and guard living entirely upon the road.

I remember some years ago returning from the continent through Normandy, after jolting about for several weeks in the huge French diligences, and then crossing to Brighton. A few hours after landing I mounted the box of the age by the side of poor Stevenson to come up to town. The sensation on the starting of the coach was indescribable; there was a light-winged airiness, without the idea of substance, more resembling the feeling of *nothingness* produced by the action of those by-gone horses, the velocipedes. Just such a sensation is produced on mounting a slow night-coach after travelling by the smooth-running, whizzing mail; the torpidity which pervades the whole concern, the slow slothful movements of every brute belonging to it, from those that pull it to those that are pulled. The hour of starting was nominally a quarter before six; however, I think by seven we had well-nigh cleared the town with a full complement of both live and dead lumber. I was stuck up behind with five other lumps of humanity, one of whom was a woman who, with a troublesomely affectionate brother, was on her way to the sister island. A friend of mine says that playing sweet to one's sister is as bad as eating cold veal without salt, and I honour his opinion. The lady was not used to the road, and on changing horses at Hounslow and hearing her brother interrogate the guard as to what sort of a team they would get next stage, she inquired the meaning of the word, and if a "team of horses" meant bad ones,

The distance from London to Reading is under forty miles, which we accomplished in rather more than six hours; the road, however, was extra heavy, and for a mile or two was under water. As we approached the town I called to the coachman, and desired him to set me down at the Bear Inn. "It's no use stopping there, sir; they will all be in bed," said he. "Never mind," said I, "stop there, that is all." What was my astonishment after this to find myself bowling up the High Street, long past the namesake of the man "wot drove the coach," quite regardless of my injunction. At length I got him to stop. "Why, sir," said he, "it is no use your going to the Bear; they are all in bed long ago." I made no reply, but taking my portmanteau on my shoulder, I left him, without paying him any compliment for himself. This is the right way to treat a coachman, and for this reason I am an advocate for paying them in addition to the fare; the customary vail affords a sort of hold which may be very judiciously and conveniently exercised at times. Besides, it is rather too bad for them to carry their catering for a favourite house thus far, to the utter exclusion of the passengers' wishes. On the continent it is a regular system, and the landlords of inns pay the postilions very handsomely for driving John Bull to their houses, nil he will he; and many a scene I have witnessed arising out of the practice. In England, I believe, the post-boy always has his dinner gratis from the landlord of the house to which he drives.

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR JOHN COPE'S.

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS—AN INN BREAKFAST FOR A MAN IN A HURRY—A DAY AT BUCKLERSBURY WITH SIR JOHN COPE'S HOUNDS—AN INN DINNER—"ANYTHING YOU LIKE, SIR"—A DAY AT HARLEY ROW—A GREAT SPORTSMAN IN WELLINGTONS—A CAPITAL DAY'S SPORT.

THE boots of the Bear was up waiting for me, though my servant was not forthcoming, having betaken himself to the mail-coach office to await my arrival. Having therefore specially charged the former to get up early and let the latter know of my arrival, I retired to roost; but after about an hour I was awoke by a most excruciating toothache, and lay tossing about in the greatest agony for several hours. Then, recollecting that I had a mixture with me, I groped in the dark for the phial containing the spirits of wine and laudanum, a capital specific.

I was, however, thrown out of my usual course, and what with that and the chambermaid's failure to call me, I did not wake until past seven. I got up and rang the bell, desiring to know if the boots had found my servant. The answer was that he had not yet returned. I therefore began shaving, in the middle of which ceremony I was interrupted by the entrance of the boots, who came to acquaint me that before he got to

the stable the groom had gone out with my horses to exercise. There was a job! I never was in such a rage in my life, and if the boot-jack had only been half a yard nearer to me, I should certainly have knocked the man down with it. I told him to go directly, find out in what direction they had gone, and bring them back; and stamping and foaming I again resumed the shaving operation at the imminent peril of my throat. As I rose from the glass my eye glanced into the stableyard, and shocking to relate there stood the ruffianly boots, whom I supposed had arrived at my stable by that time, cracking his jokes with a passing post-boy. Oh, how I longed for something to throw at his head! A chest of drawers—anything. I opened the window and roared to him at the top of my voice, putting to flight at the same time a large flock of pigeons which were pecking below; and then I began to speculate upon the probability of getting to hounds, and whether I should dress for the chase or not. At length things took a turn. My groom cast up, a horse was stated to be in readiness, and the hounds were *only* fourteen miles off according to the postmaster's calculations.

There was just time to do it, and that was all. "Now go downstairs," said I to my groom, "and tell the waiter to make the tea, and have some fried ham and a couple of eggs on the table when I come down in ten minutes' time; then go to the stable and have my horse at the door in twenty minutes."

I am one of the most punctual fellows in England, and ten minutes saw me in the dining-room; but is there a man who ever prevailed upon a waiter to place breakfast upon the table before he entered the room? If so, that man is in

possession of a secret more valuable than the mystery of the philosopher's stone. The philosopher's stone may produce gold, but this secret is the secret of producing time, according to the old axiom of money saved being money gained; and taking a retrospective view of many, very many, mornings like the one I now describe, spent in different inns in various parts of England, I cannot charge my memory with one single solitary instance when my request that breakfast should be prepared was complied with. As I entered the room I saw the uplifted lid of a Britannia metal teapot—sure indication of emptiness. In the centre of the table stood a loaf of bread as large as a Fleet Street paving stone, flanked by a slice of questionable-looking butter and a small jug of cream: two shining silver canisters graced the top of the table, accompanied by an aide-de-camp in the shape of a blue glass salt-cellar, while the hissing of the kettle betokened its uneasiness on a large blazing fire. Seizing the bell-rope I made the whole Bear resound with an indignant peal, for be it known that a skilful ringer can convey his feelings almost as well by the tongue of the bell as the tongue of the head; but ere the waiter had set breakfast on the table, intimation that the twenty minutes had elapsed appeared in the shape of my horse before the window. How delightful is the sight of one's horse after a long absence, more particularly if, as in this case, he be a favourite. I always regret that a horse cannot, like a dog, express his gratification at the return of a friend, though the old fable of the donkey dancing among the chickens ought not to be disregarded.

It was a lovely morning—the first spring day

we had this year, and all around seemed "calm, beneficent, and gay." My horse seemed to enter into my feelings, and trod the ground as though disdainful of the touch, ever and anon glancing at some object by the roadside which might afford an excuse for being frolicsome, or casting around the country as if impatient at not meeting with the hounds. Friday is not a day on which a large field is often found with hounds in a rural country; and I had travelled some miles ere the pricking of my horse's ears, and gentle inclination to trot, denoted the appearance of a red coat. Presently up came a gig containing a couple more, one of whom was the worthy baronet himself, the Master of the Hounds, driven by Mr Simons of Reading, and as we approached the meet (the Three Crowns, Bucklersbury) a few more fell into the line of road, though at no time of the day did the field exceed five-and-twenty or so. This might partly be accounted for by the fact that the Craven Hounds were meeting at a place called the Fence, within a few miles of Sir John Cope's fixture.

About eleven o'clock we threw into a cover close to the Three Crowns, whence we adjourned to one called Blackland, where we found a very accommodating fox, who, after giving us a ringing gallop of a couple of hours over very pretty country, partly forest and partly open, wished us good-afternoon about three o'clock, within a mile or two of the place whence we started. We would have killed him, I think, had the huntsman known the country better, or rather had the real huntsman been out; but the latter unfortunately being confined to the house with that fashionable complaint the gout, his duty had devolved upon the first whip, by name Gardiner, from Sir Richard

Sutton's; and he, having only come into the country last season, was a stranger to the ways of it. Nevertheless, he showed us a very nice day's sport, and we left off in very good humour both with him and ourselves, and that is everything. The second whip, a very civil obliging fellow, is the son of the huntsman, and is a most ridiculous likeness of a French nobleman who cut a conspicuous figure in the fashionable world for a season or two. The day had been warm, and coming to a hedge-side public-house shortly after we had abandoned the chase, all pulled up and had a sample of the mischievous effects of the New Beer Bill [1] in the shape of some abominable wash for which they charged as much as they used before the passing of the Act. Indeed, in all the countries I visited last season, I think the Beer Bill operated most mischievously, quite contrary, I am sure, to the expectation of the legislature. So far from the labouring-class getting a good and wholesome beverage at a moderate price, they are supplied with a deleterious unwholesome drink, at, in many cases, the same price as was charged for good beer before the passing of the Act. I drink beer myself, and had some interest in watching the effects of this experiment. The sooner it is abandoned the better.

When we left off hunting this day the hounds had eighteen miles to travel home, having laid out the night before at a kennel at the sign of the World's End, on the Bath Road. Sir John Cope

[1] The declared object of the Beerhouse Act of 1830 was to give greater facilities for the sale of beer and cider; it permitted any householder to retail these on a £2, 2s. licence. Its defects were recognised, and an amending Act (4 & 5 Wm. IV. c. 85) was passed in 1835.—E. D. C.

is a most indefatigable sportsman, and few care less about distance or late hours than does he. On the way home I overtook a gentleman whom I had observed riding well up to the hounds all day, and struck up a conversation with him; neither of us was in any great hurry, and we sauntered quietly along, discussing the merits of the different packs in the neighbourhood, &c. I discovered that he, like myself, had been paying a visit to the Vale of White Horse country, and what will surprise no one who has been in it, he had been staying at Wroughton also—perhaps occupying the identical four-post bed in which I had reposed so long and so comfortably. This enhanced the pleasure one always finds in the conversation of a brother sportsman. The road slipped away, and we were in Reading before we had discussed half our topics, certainly before either of us had the slightest idea of each other's identity; for on the following day when we again met in the field and he very politely offered to introduce me to Sir John, I had to enlighten him as to my name.

A country town without a single acquaintance is but a slow place, and having disposed of an hour or so in the stable, I returned to the Bear to see about some dinner, which I had forgotten to order in my hurry in the morning.

"What can I have, waiter?" said I, as he answered the bell.

"*Anything*, sir," said he, "beef-steaks or mutton-chops, mutton-chops or beef-steaks; or perhaps you would prefer a pork-chop?"

"Could you give me a lamb-chop?" said I.

"I fear, sir, there is no lamb to be had yet; anything *but* lamb, sir,—'beef-steaks or mutton-chops, mutton-chops or beef-steaks.'"

"Well, then, let it be beef," said I, "and tell the cook to belabour it well with the leg of a stool, so that I may not be afraid all the time I am eating it that I am feasting off one of my top-boots, for I want them on again to-morrow morning."

Mind, I do not mean to insinuate that the Bear is other than a very well-conducted house; no man goes to a country inn to indulge in the pleasures of the table, and, like the young cornet, I can always rough it with a beef-steak and a bottle of Burgundy. I am not, however, one of those geniuses who are "never less alone than when alone." "Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a God," says Lord Bacon, and to neither of these titles can I lay claim; if a man is to be alone he may as well be in bed, to which place consign me for the night of the 11th of February.

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Now—

> "'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
> Ascending, fires th' horizon; while the clouds,
> That crowd away before the driving wind,
> More ardent as the disk emerges more,
> Resemble most some city in a blaze,
> Seen through the leafless wood."

Another lovely morning. This day forms the brightest greenest spot in the whole of my memory's waste of last season. A gentle rain had fallen during the night, refreshing earth and air. It is the early bird that gets the worm, and I was up and abroad by daybreak. The hounds met at Hartley Row Gate, due south of Reading, in the Hampshire country, between twenty and

thirty miles from the meet of the preceding day. The distance to cover was reputed to be fifteen miles, though the beautiful scenery so beguiled the road as almost to make me regret arriving at the end. It lay principally through forest country, with here and there an open common; until, when within a few miles of Sir John Cope's beautiful residence, it assumes a wilder and more moorish aspect, a considerable extent of heath lying a mile or two to the south of his house.

Just as I reached this part a drizzling rain commenced, and I pushed forward to seek shelter at the meet. It was at a straggling village on the Basingstoke Road; neither hounds nor horses were visible, though the man at the gate said they would not be long in coming. A little rain was still falling, so getting off my horse I took shelter for myself and it under an open shed at the end of a blacksmith's shop which stands by the side of the turnpike. Looking back at the road along which I had just passed I saw a red coat coming along at a snail's pace, the wearer evidently regardless of the sprinkling. He is a sportsman, thought I; and see! he wears drab breeches—a sure sign. I have a great respect for men who mount the "kerseys," having a pair myself, which generally evokes inquiry as to what I pay my groom for the loan of them. The wearer drew near, and to my surprise I saw they were drab fustian trousers instead of drab kerseymere breeches. He was a man somewhat stricken in years, of grave and thoughtful countenance. His dress consisted of a plain scarlet coat, a lilac silk waistcoat, kid gloves, the aforesaid fustians, and boots which we call Wellingtons; and certainly they were Wellington's in every sense of the word, for the wearer was neither more or less than the

illustrious Arthur himself! There was the conqueror of Napoleon, the discomforter of Marmont, and late Prime Minister of England, at Hartley Row Gate at a quarter-past ten in the morning, waiting for a pack of fox-hounds without a single attendant. As he advanced towards the blacksmith's shop my red coat caught his eye, and, at the same moment, my eye caught his undeniable nose. I took off my hat to the greatest man of the day.

His Grace advanced towards the shed, acknowledging my salute with a bow and good-humoured smile; and finding that the hounds would come to the place, he followed my example, and putting himself and horse under it, we stayed chatting together until the rain was over. He had been out with Mr Villebois' hounds a few days before, he said, and had had a good day's sport, though he was quite ignorant of the country we were going to on that day, notwithstanding the nearness of the meet to Strathfieldsaye. As we left the shed a stage-coach drove by, the passengers on and coachman of which, recognising him, took off their hats, which he acknowledged with the old two-fingered salute to his nose. His groom, who had been to Hartford Bridge, now arrived; and shortly after came the hounds. Sir John Cope, two ladies, and several gentlemen also made their appearance.

The Duke was quite the country gentleman, cordial and intimate with all. First he shook hands with Sir John, then with Squire this, and then with Squire that; in fact, he was hand and glove with every one. This was the day of all others on which a Master of Hounds would feel anxious to show sport, and few proved more auspicious. Scarce had we thrown into cover



R. B. Davis.

Duke of Wellington with the Vine.

ere the shrill horn proclaimed the break, and away we all went in high glee. A curious circumstance now occurred, of which many who were out may not yet be aware. The hunted fox was minus a foot, and was presently run into a corner near where we found; but ere the hounds had paid the last tribute of respect to his memory another supplied his place, and went gallantly away without causing a two minutes' check. Aye, and he did more—he gave us as pretty a run as any I witnessed during the whole season.

Certainly one advantage a stranger has in a country is that he does not always know when they have a ringing fox on foot; and I was surprised, at the end of an hour and three-quarters or so, to find that we were only a few miles to the east of the spot at which we threw off. It was just the sort of day's sport to please a man like the Duke of Wellington, who, though mighty in the field of war, cuts no great figure hunting. Indeed I have seldom seen a man with less idea of riding: his seat is unsightly in the extreme, and few men get more falls in the course of the year. One thing certainly may be said, that in the case of such a man one is sure to hear of them; but he does look as though he could fall where others could not. Nevertheless, he seemed to enjoy the thing amazingly, and what with leading over occasionally, and his groom's assistance, he did very well. A trifle occurred of no importance in itself, further than showing his considerate nature. Somehow or other I had forgotten to tie my hat on, and coming to a jump into a narrow slip of wood, my horse being somewhat fresh rushed at his leap and away went my hat. The Duke had just gone over before me and his groom was the next to follow; seeing what had happened,

he pulled up until his servant was over, and then sent him to pick it up for me.

The run, as I said, was a good ringing one, the pace moderate, the country easy, and the finish fine. We killed in a lane close to Hartley Church. The fox had crossed the road, but being closely pursued jumped into it again among all the horses, and notwithstanding the scramble that took place no accident happened to the hounds. Just as the fox's brush and pads were cut off up came the Duke, to whom Sir John presented the former to add to his many other trophies; and the day being somewhat advanced, and every one seeming to have had *quantum suff.*, the field dispersed.

CHAPTER XX.

MR VILLEBOIS' (THE H.H.).

JOURNEY BY MAIL TO ALRESFORD—A "REAL GENTLEMAN"—HIS POWERS OF PERSUASION—THE HAMBLEDON HOUNDS—A DAY AT THE FOREST OF BERE—MR SMITHERS OF ALRESFORD—WINCHESTER—THE TWO "KENNELS"—MR VILLEBOIS' HOUNDS—A DAY AT TOOTHILL BRICK-KILN—AT KING'S SOMBORNE—ROMSEY FAIR—THE GIPSY AUCTIONEER.

I SAW little of hounds after my visit to Sir John Cope's until nearly the end of the season.[1] A day with the Berkeley, a few days in Surrey, and a day or two in Essex are all I find in my journal; and I may express my regret that two of the packs with which I then hunted have since ceased to exist—at least in the countries in which I shared their sport. Colonel Jolliffe's, to be sure, have gone to an adjoining country, and Lord Petre's have been united to an old-established pack. Both, however, are now farther removed from the capital, rendering a day with either as difficult of attainment as one in more distant and better hunting countries.

From me, who have to acknowledge with gratitude many civilities received from members of these hunts, it may appear somewhat ungracious to say that the real essence of hunting

[1] Surtees, during these months, was in London engaged upon the task of organising his *New Sporting Magazine*.—E. D. C.

is not attainable with any of the establishments within reach of Town. I nevertheless say it with the conviction that my statement will be accepted by all who have hunted with—if I may be allowed the expression—both a metropolitan and a country pack. Nor can the statement excite any surprise, for it exists not in the nature of things that that friendship and cordiality, which is engendered by near neighbourhood in a country district, can be transferred to the turmoil of an overflowing population in a large capital. It must have been observed by many that, however intimate and cordial persons may be in the country, on their arrival in Town an unaccountable coolness—sometimes to a considerable, at other times to a less degree—comes over them when they reach the smoky atmosphere. This influence also prevails in the hunting field, where many of the sportsmen like myself are but birds of passage—here to-day and gone to-morrow; and I feel satisfied that no one who can hunt in any other country would select a pack within reach of London by preference.

It was about the close of dusty March that one fine evening, with the wind at the east, I found myself at the Piccadilly coach-office waiting for the Poole mail to convey me to Alresford, in the picturesque county of Hants, whither I had marched my cavalry a few days previously. The mail, as is not unfrequently the case, came up with what the coachmen call "a crazy woman" inside—that is to say, it was empty. On the box by the coachman was perched a solitary gentleman, and behind them I took my place.

My fellow-traveller soon gave symptoms of being "a real gentleman," according to road phraseology. The action of his arms as the coach pulled up, his style of handling the reins when

transferred to him, and the liberal distribution of sundry shillings among the horse-keepers all proclaimed it. First, "Nasty Bob," the ostler, got a shilling for talking about the leaders' "haction"; then "Greedy Dick," the boots, had one for handing him up the *vip*; then came "Sneaking Will," the cad and coach-caller, to say sommot civil to the gemman, and even the neighbouring waterman was seduced from his hackney-coaches to try the persuasive power of his eloquence. Four shillings and sixpence he distributed at Hatchett's door, and left the Capital with the best wishes of the donees for his safe return. His generosity, however, was not allowed a long respite. The coach stopping at that vile hole Brentford, the obstinate driver of a broad-wheeled waggon insisted upon passing, to the inconvenience of the mail, deaf to the entreaties of the coachman, who vowed he would only be a second. Finding the waggoner likely to carry the day by dint of weight, the traveller volunteered for the service, and descending from the box, commenced his argument by the forcible and intelligible appeal of a shilling placed in the man's hand with, "I don't stand any nonsense, you know, so now take your waggon out of the way"—a request so handsomely made and so properly accompanied as to be irresistible even to a Marlborough waggoner.

I am unacquainted with the road, consequently do not know the place where we stopped between eleven and twelve o'clock to change horses. My fellow-traveller would have a sandwich and a glass of beer, but the inn being shut up for the night, there seemed little chance of obtaining them. However, he commenced a most riotous attack on the door, which soon produced a diminutive cripple in night clothes, with a lantern in his (or

was it her ?) hand. "What may you desire, sir ?" gruffly demanded the lantern-bearer.

"I want a ham sandwich and a glass of ale," answered the traveller.

"The bar is closed, sir, and the waiter is gone to bed."

"Then pull him out of bed," said the traveller.

"He has given orders never to be called after eleven o'clock," replied the lantern-bearer.

"Come," exclaimed the traveller, "I don't stand any nonsense, you know," pulling something out of his pocket. "Here," says he, "take this," putting it into the lantern-bearer's hand ; "now bring him downstairs directly."

What will money not do ?

> "Gold alone does passion move,
> Gold monopolizes love."

So wrote Cowley in the seventeenth century, nor has money lost its charms since. In this case it speedily produced a lean and hungry-looking waiter, with some most *un*-Vauxhall-ish-looking sandwiches, or rather lumps of fat bacon and bread, which were speedily submitted to the gastric department of my fellow-voyager.

Amid a profusion of promises of new whips to the coachman, and upper benjamins to the guard, about two in the morning we pulled up at the Swan at Alresford. There my friend, if I may call one whose face I never saw, thought a glass of warm gin and water would suit his complaint, and accordingly ordered the sitter-up of the house, who came to take my portmanteau, to bring him one. "There is no warm water to be got, sir," was the answer. "Oh, yes, there is, I know," retorted my friend. "No, sir," said the waiter ; "the kitchen fire has been out these

two hours." "Come! you know I don't stand any nonsense!" His hand went into his pocket; out came something into the hand of the man. "Now go and try what you can do." "I'll do my best," replied he, "but I *really* think the fire is out." Here he was lying, for our arrival had disturbed him and three others over a game of cards in front of a good blaze.

On the next, or rather on that day the wind still kept most uninvitingly in the east. The hounds met some fourteen miles off, at Holywell House, due south of Alresford, whither I despatched a horse early in the morning.

The Hambledon Hounds, hunted by Mr King, were those to which I was about to pay my respects, and I found them in good form in front of a gentleman's house, at the windows whereof appeared divers red coats and now and then a petticoat. There are few prettier sights than a well-appointed field-meeting in front of a gentleman's seat, and I have not often seen a better show than this morning afforded. After the cherry-brandy bottle had made its circuit in the house, and the brown October jug had done the same without, the horsemen mounted, and a ha-ha that divides the lawn was jumped for the amusement of the ladies on the way to the cover. Indeed, I think this was the only feat we performed during the day; for, somehow or other, foxes were wanting, and after drawing very many likely covers blank, we betook ourselves unto the King's Liberty, or Forest of Bere, as it is called, where, about four o'clock in the afternoon, as I heard some days after, a fox was unkennelled of which they could make nothing. For my own part, when I found myself near Nelson's Monument on Portsdown Hill in a strange land with the day

so far advanced, I declined it altogether, and rode home through Soberton, West Meon, and divers other places, reaching Alresford about seven o'clock, as clean as when I started, for the ground was completely parched, and everything against sport.

The next day was a *dies non*. The Hambledon did not hunt, and Mr Villebois had gone to his other country, taking up his quarters at Romsey. I therefore had to amuse myself the best way I could; but remembering that that well-known sporting yeoman, Mr Smithers, resided at Alresford, I made an excuse for introducing myself, and found him sitting snugly over his pipe and a pint of October in a room decorated with foxes' brushes and other insignia of sport. Mr Smithers is one of a race of men now, I am sorry to say, somewhat on the wane—the honest English yeoman. Luckily for him, he farmed during the time of agricultural prosperity, and wisely withdrew ere the arrival of a reverse of fortune. He has consequently been enabled to set himself down for the remainder of his life upon former earnings, happy, contented, and respected by all. After sitting for an hour hearing the feats of his famous crop-eared horse, and his tales suggested by many of the foxes' brushes that adorned his room, I took my leave of him and Alresford, first paying my bill at the Swan, which I am happy to recommend as a very excellent house.

Winchester was my next billet, to arrive at which place I took a circuitous route by Itchin, a small village standing on a trout-stream of that name, in which there is beautiful fishing, without, I am told, much difficulty in obtaining permission. I then passed by a seat of the Duke of Buckingham's, called Avington, and arrived at the George Inn, Winchester, in time for dinner. Winchester

is a much livelier looking place than the generality of cathedral towns. There is also a greater appearance of trade. Of course, everything is "Winchester measure." Indeed, I saw a tailor measuring a pair of trousers *by* a boy instead of measuring the boy for them.

The following day being Good Friday, I spent it visiting the cathedral in the morning and two kennels in the afternoon—viz., Mr Villebois' at Hursley for hounds, and the late Mr Wycombe's at "Winchester College" for boys, where they are locked up all day, in order, I suppose, to expand their ideas. The cathedral is a fine building, light and airy withal, and doubtless very delightful to those holding prebendal stalls therein. As in all similar places, the vergers have some great curiosities to show to the traveller, an inspection of which, however, I declined. Having once been shown the "skull of Oliver Cromwell when a boy," I can never condescend to look at anything inferior.

The following day Mr Villebois' hounds met at Toothill Brick-kiln. There was a very small field, and I had ample time for inspection of the dog-pack. We first drew a large cover of Lord Palmerston's, called Nightingale Wood, a propitious name for lovers, but an unfavourable one for fox-hunters, it not often holding a fox. We then kept going from cover to cover, more for the sake of the exercise, I think, than in the expectation of a run, even if we did find. However, about noon we found a fox, which, after some very pretty hunting, slow, save when from time to time we got upon the turf, we ran to ground in a drain in Mr Fleming's park, a few yards below the entrance. A terrier was sent for, and while we were admiring the magnificent view from

the gates, certainly one of the finest I ever saw, Forster's "tally-ho, tally-ho!" as the fox bolted, roused us to action. He might as well have stayed where he was for any sport he showed, as the hounds could hardly own the scent, and clouds of dust were drifting about in all directions.

After hunting this day I took up my quarters at Romsey, at the White Horse, kept by Mr Bell, formerly in the navy, but now exchanged into the Hants Yeomanry Cavalry. Romsey used formerly to be headquarters for the gentlemen who accompanied Mr Villebois to this side of the country; but matrimony, hard times, and other misfortunes have reduced their ranks to nothing, and Mr Villebois and I had the whole place to ourselves. On Sunday I took a ride to Lyndhurst for my letters, which place was also empty; and on Monday I met Mr Villebois' hounds at King's Somborne, a fine open country, but somewhat short of foxes. We did not find until the afternoon, when, after a good scurry of five-and-twenty minutes, we ran to ground in Sir William Heathcote's park, where the hounds were to meet on the following day. The field on this day was also very small, there not being half a dozen scarlet coats out, and not above that number of other colours. Among the latter was the well-known facetious Mr Wilkinson of Alresford, who remained at Romsey overnight to try and hunt his way home in the morning.

Mr Villebois, I believe, has hunted the same country longer than any Master of Hounds in England.[1] During the whole period he has never accepted one farthing subscription, nor has there ever been anything wanting to make the establishment effective and complete. At the period

[1] Took office 1802.

of which I am speaking he had in kennel about sixty couple of as beautiful hounds as were ever beheld. To praise one must be to praise the whole; but let a visitor draw Hotspur if he wishes to see legs and feet, or Dexter if he wishes to behold a perfect hound. Forster, the huntsman, is so well known in the west that I can scarcely divest my mind of the idea that his fame is equally established in all parts of England. It is true that he is not so young as he has been, but there are few huntsmen of the present day who understand their business so thoroughly, or take greater pleasure in the genuine sport. Both he and his master have seen great changes in their country since they first commenced operations in it—wastes enclosed, heaths cultivated, pheasant preserves established, and fox-destroying introduced; nevertheless, with all these evils, and a naturally cold-scenting country, they manage to nail up their five-and-twenty brace or so of lips annually. Forster is assisted by two whips in the field, one of whom, Sawyer, is a first-rate performer.

After the day's sport I again returned to Romsey, meeting by the way divers country people as drunk as Paganini, reminding me that it was Romsey Fair day; and on reaching the town I found the streets positively blockaded with cheeses, crockery-ware, and other commodities. In front of the White Horse, within a few yards of the window at which I took up my position, was a swarthy, black-eyed, cunning-looking gipsy man, standing on a board placed across the shafts of a covered cart, the ends of which were supported by sundry cheeses. He was dressed in dirty fustian, with a loose black neck-cloth, while the huge flaps of an old *chapeau bras* disengaged from the loop, shaded his countenance from the sun. He was evidently

a proficient in his art, and ran glibly over the valuable qualities of the articles he every now and then produced from his stock-in-trade. First he offered a shaving-brush, then a pair of razors, then a two-feet rule with a silver clasp, afterwards a mirror, always putting the article up at some enormous price, and, after the manner of a Dutch auction, gradually reducing it to the figure he meant to take. Some few lots sold, but the majority were passed by. At length, after a pause to dive into his cart, he again resumed, and, undoing a package, he addressed the crowd: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, I shall offer to your notice a really elegant and useful article, none of your trumpery useless things that are only made to sell, but a really valuable domestic utensil," and pulling off the paper, he exhibited a brown pepper-box! "Now here," said he, "is a really useful article, one that you cannot do without, a valuable pepper-box, double-Japanned, silver-lined, with a gold hinge. Now I will not ask you 1s. 6d. for this useful domestic article, or 1s. 5d., or 1s. 4d., or 1s. 3d., or 1s. 2d., or yet 1s.; I will not ask you 9d., or 6d., or 3d. for it; but here, take it for a penny—who's the buyer?" Several hands were put out eagerly, and he delivered nine pepper-boxes all at once.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEW FOREST.

ROMSEY FAIR—SOUTHAMPTON—A BALL—THE NEW FOREST HOUNDS —FOREST HUNTING—HISTORY OF THE FOREST.

"Oh for the humours of a country Fair!
Nothing can exceed them."
—Old Song.

HAVING accompanied the gipsy pedlar in his round of jokes, and finding he was about to recommence them, I took my hat and sallied forth to see what else was going forward. Turning the corner of the street, my shins were saluted by a huge bludgeon that had just been aimed at three sticks, on the tops whereof were placed a red snuff-box, with a beautiful blue cock on the lid, a large pocket-knife, and a small piece of gingerbread, to any of which the player was entitled who could knock them off clear of a ring round the bottom. Close by were two hard-riding monkeys in scarlet silver-spangled jackets, mounted on white poodle dogs, which were kept at a continual gallop by the apples, nuts, &c., thrown by the spectators; while near at hand an old woman in a red cloak entreated with a cracked voice the little urchins who congregated round her stall to try their luck at her table, "the black cock against the grey, and the grey against the

black, all prizes and no blanks." Then there were the luscious gingerbread stalls, glittering with Williams and Adelaides, and all the crowned and uncrowned heads of Europe—flying horses and dancing bears, Gibraltar rock, thrice-boiled plums, and well-fingered tarts—"Here they are—sold again, and the money paid!"

But hark! the bell-man's notes are heard, and the bumpkins rush to the sound. What does he proclaim? "Notish is hereby given that there will be performed this evening in Mr Thompson's long barn, a favourite play called the 'Belley's (Belle's) Stratajim,' to conclude with a popular Farce and other entertainments, as will be expressed in the bills of the day. The performance to commence at half-past five precisely." But his voice is drowned by the yells of a gang of opposition players, rushing from the stage within the booth, wherein they had been enacting "Romeo and Juliet," to the platform without, headed by the clown in his spotted garments and mealey face, shrieking wildly, and producing a sound "something 'twixt fear and delight." Now my Juliet dances with the clown, and sure such a pair were never seen; and then a little boy in gingerbread-coloured clothes, bound with yellow worsted, appears to take part in a "threesome" Highland fling. Here is an opposition shouter, a man all covered with rags, bellowing gruffly as though he had a brush in his throat. "Walk up! walk up! walk up, ladies and gentlemen! and behold the contrast of nature. Here you will see a gigantic female giantess seven feet and a half high" (the caravan being six feet two), "and you will see the most uniquest little dwarf, whose height is only two feet and one inch, sixty years of age, and altogether the most extra-*or*dinary



ROMSEY FAIR.

phenomenon ever exhibited alive in any country, only one penny each—walk up ! walk up ! " Near this caravan is represented on canvas an interesting looking female in a blue satin gown and pink silk shoes playing with the curls of a lion's mane, while a hardy Ethiopian is seen taking a canter across the desert on the back of a crocodile. There's a mishap next door—Bunch-clod has run his toe through the head of the big drum belonging to the exhibition of the wonderful lady with white hair and pink eyes, and the showman is d——m——g his in return. Somebody has walked off with the green baize cloth which forms their curtain by day and coverlet by night; and the pot has boiled over in booth No. 3 and scalded the right ankle of a huge bum-bailiff.

The din of war lasted throughout the greater part of the night. The mob, however, committed no act of violence except on each other's carcases; and when I departed on the following day everything wore the appearance so well expressed in the adage of " a day after the Fair."

The newspapers mentioned that the Romsey Horse Fair was well attended, though from what I saw I should suppose the animals made up in quantity what they wanted in quality, for the gipsies with whom the Fair swarmed seemed to be the principal owners. Mr Villebois (by the way one of the pleasantest men I ever met) having left Romsey for a day or two after hunting on the 4th of April, and there being no prospect of sport until there came rain, I followed his example on the 5th, and proceeded to Southampton on horseback, forwarding my clothes by the coach, and arrived in time to have a look at the town before dinner. It is always, I understand, rather lively in appearance, though an event which the news-

papers described as an "Unlimited Ball," being advertised for that evening, might have some effect in making it look rather more so than usual.

It seems that the town and county of Southampton, which possesses all the requisites for genteel residence, such as a large jail, assembly rooms, billiard-rooms, coffee-houses, and circulating libraries, has, in common with most other places, certain inhabitants, or perhaps visitors, who are, or consider themselves, formed of Nature's porcelain clay, and for whose accommodation a sort of branch Almack's has been established to secure them from the contact of the common crockery of the place. These select *reunions* being at an end for the season, this Unlimited Ball followed as a sort of wind-up, to which the only introduction necessary was seven shillings of the current coin. The Unlimited, however, proved very limited in quantity, and in quality was very dowdy and un-Almack-like. I would here remark upon the absurdity of the English with regard to the time of commencing their evening or, more properly speaking, midnight festivities. So afraid is every one of arriving, not first but before the room is quite full, that many put themselves to very serious inconvenience in consuming the hours between dinner and the ball. In the country six o'clock is a very fair hour for that important meal called dinner, and in these degenerate days, when few men can carry more than a bottle of wine at all decently, they surely might contrive to find their way into a ballroom before the dead of night, at which hour I encountered divers Southamptonians on their way upstairs as I was descending on my return to the Dolphin.

Southampton is nevertheless a pleasant place. I have not got a house to let in it, like the parish

clerk at Tunbridge Wells, who used to give out the following psalm when he wanted a tenant :—

> "Mount Sion is a pleasant place
> (Where I've a house to let)."

From Southampton to Lyndhurst is about ten miles, if I remember right, and a disinterested looking guide-post, a little way out of the town, has this distich :—

> "If the road . . . is one rood nigher,
> The tolls thereon are one-third higher."

A very valuable notification to travellers.

The N.F.H., otherwise the New Forest Hounds, met on the 6th upon Lyndhurst race-course, an open heath on the Southampton side of the town, but, as far as my eyes served me, innocent of anything like a race-course. Here assembled the largest field that had been seen throughout the season, some fifty or sixty horsemen ; but this was nothing, I am told, in comparison to the numbers there used to be when Mr Nicol hunted the Forest and the hounds were kept at Lyndhurst. Indeed, it was almost entirely composed of the resident sportsmen of the country, with a very slight sprinkling of strangers.

What a goodly sight is the meet of a pack of hounds in the Forest ! The red coats gliding among the ancient trees, startling the herds of wild deer, who come bounding by with the swiftness of the wind, halting every now and then in the distance and eyeing the intruders, then again starting off, while the old woods re-echo to the sound of the huntsman's voice. The Forest hunting is most peculiar and, I think, most fascinating : the music and working of the hounds, the abun-

dance of foxes, the picturesque scenery, the wild open heaths and scattered trees all contribute to gratify the eye and ear, added to which the dryer the season and the more impossible sport elsewhere, the better the hunting in the Forest. I make no doubt that many men go there with very erroneous ideas of its nature, and expect the riding to be mere child's play compared to that in enclosed countries. I know I did, and my first day convinced me of the mistake. To hunt in the Forest with any degree of pleasure a man should have very temperate and fine-mouthed horses. The frequent turnings and twisting among trees, the branches of which are no respecters of persons, and would as soon "Absolomise" a prince as a pickpocket, require these qualities. At the same time the horse must have both strength and speed—strength to get over the open heaths (which are very heavy in parts), and speed to live with the hounds, which go a tremendous pace at times, and are not to be caught again if once lost to sight. I saw out two or three times, ridden by a groom, a chestnut horse which bore a very high character as a forest hunter. He belonged to Sir George Rose, and, I think, was afterwards purchased by Lord Lisle for a much larger sum than one would suppose would be given for a horse to ride in that country. The bogs are formidable; and however people may talk of their being easily known or discovered, I can only say that I saw three *natives* floundering in one all at once, one of whom (a reverend divine) is supposed to be as well acquainted with the Forest as any man who hunts it.

This Forest or Chase was made by William the Conqueror, and, as its name bespeaks, is one of the most modern of that forest-making monarch's.

Walter Mapes, an historian of ancient date, says that "the Conqueror took away much good land from God and men, converted its use to wild beasts and the sport of dogs, demolishing thirty-six mother churches, and driving away the inhabitants of many villages and towns, measuring together fifty miles in compass," upon which I am of Mr Daniel's opinion, who in his 'Rural Sports' observes, "we may perhaps be allowed to indulge our scepticism as to the correctness of the information."

The same gentleman also gives us the following specimen of the poetry (or rather doggerel) of the eleventh century, being the commission for the appointment of a keeper given by Edward the Confessor to Randolph Peperking :—

"Ich Edward Koning
Have given of my Forest the Kepinge
Of the hundred of Chelmer and Dancing
To *Randolph Peperking* and to his kyndling ;
With Heote and Hinde, Doe, and Bucke,
Hare and Fox, Cat and Brocke,
Wild-fowell with his flocke,
Patrick, Fesent-hen and Fesent-cocke
With green and wild ssob and stocke,
To kepen and to yemen by all her might
Both by day and eke by night :
And hounds for to hold
Good and swifte and bolde :
Four Greahounds and six bracches
For Hare and Foxe and wild Catles.
And therefore I'ch make him ny booke :
Witness the Bishop Wolston
And boke-yierned many one,
And swein of Essex our Brother
And teken him many other
And our Stiwand Howelin
That by sought me for him."

An immense quantity of the weed called fern grows in the Forest, which is mown and won in the same way as hay, and used as bedding for cows

and cart horses. It is not, however, to be compared with straw.

Within the present century several enclosures have been made in the New Forest for young plantations; but as there are excellent grass rides in all directions, and the gates are left open, they form little or no impediment to hunting. The oaks came very far short of my expectation. Instead of fine, tall, stately timber, I found the generality crooked, twisted trees, branching out in all directions, and assuming all sorts of grotesque shapes. They are, however, considered valuable on account of these very deformities, being better adapted for shipbuilding. Mr Gilpin, in his remarks on forest scenery, attributes their peculiar growth to the rocky stratum or hard gravelly bed, which obliges the roots to take a zigzag course, and causes the branches to assume a corresponding form. Very accommodating on their part, I am sure! There was a timber sale during the time I was at Lyndhurst, which, for want of something better to do, I attended. The trees were sold standing, producing about eight pounds a load, consisting of fifty feet of timber with bark, loppings, &c.

My first day's hunting showed me that a man must be broad awake to ride to hounds in the New Forest. We soon found in one of the enclosures near Lyndhurst, but the hounds not getting away very cleverly with the fox for want of a whipper-in (who was invaliding), he got too much start. The scent being good, however, we had some very pretty hunting for about a couple of hours, when all at once, by a sudden turn, two or three others and myself lost sight of the hounds, and though we followed for several miles, neither saw nor heard anything more of them.

On the 8th of May they met at Picket Post, but just as I was getting on horseback the flood-gates of heaven opened and drenched me. It cleared up towards noon, and thinking the rain had been general, I rode to the kennel at Bramshaw to see whether the hounds were going out, and found, to my surprise, that they had left at the usual hour, and, what was more, had had a good run. I dived into the Forest in the direction they threw off, in the hopes of coming upon them, but after riding to the holloas of three itinerant pig-feeders, I gave it up as a bad job, and, catching a glimpse of the tall fir-trees near Lyndhurst, rode for them. These trees are of great use to strangers, forming an excellent land-mark conspicuous from most parts of the forest. Lyndhurst Church steeple may also be seen a good way off, but the trees are the things to look for. The village itself is small and neat, and when well filled with sports-men must be a very agreeable quarter. Last year, I am sorry to say, it was anything but cheerful; there was not a soul but myself, and my horses were the only ones in the stables, *Il est facheux de voir une belle campagne sans pouvoir dire a quelqu'un, Voila! une belle campagne*—a sentiment the truth of which I realised at Lyndhurst, for there was no one to whom I could say, "What a charming hunting morning! How well the scent would lie to-day." Or, "What excellent port we had last night."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE NEW FOREST AND MR CODRINGTON'S.

REMOVAL OF THE NEW FOREST KENNELS FROM LYNDHURST—GREAT WANT OF COMPANY THERE LAST YEAR—JOURNEY FROM LYNDHURST TO SALISBURY—THE CATHEDRAL—A FRENCH COACHMAN—LAST DAY OF THE SEASON WITH MR CODRINGTON'S HOUNDS AT YARNBURY CASTLE.

THE removal of the kennel to Bramshaw, five miles from Lyndhurst, is certainly a disadvantage to the latter place; for there are few sportsmen who cannot pass an hour or two in a kennel very agreeably; and on a *dies non* or a pouring wet day, what is an unfortunate man to do with himself? The kennel used to be a most popular lounge during Mr Nicol's time. From all accounts Mr Nicol must have been admirable in the Forest; his humour alone is worth any money. Mr Wyndham is a keen sportsman, takes great delight in his hounds, and considering the disadvantage he was under last season, deprived of the services of his whipper-in during the greater part of it, did wonders, and improved considerably on his first year's performances; at least so I was told, for I was not there myself. The last day I was with him we had a very good run; we found, as usual, very early, and killed after an hour and a half before a good field, all of whom were eager to go on, but a sharp shower falling just

as the hounds had worried their fox, Mr Wyndham observed that he thought the best thing was to leave well alone, and accordingly took his hounds home at one o'clock.

The hounds at this time certainly had the appearance of being overworked, but considering all they had done during the season, the nature of their country, and the fact that the number then in kennel was about fifty couple, it was not to be wondered at. It used to be thought that forest-hunting produced foot-lameness in hounds, and many were the causes assigned for it, but I believe Mr Wyndham's have been spared so far.

Having left the hounds on their way home, I rode round the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst to see the different seats with which it is studded; and truly beautiful many of them are, particularly Sir George Rose's. Most of these residences, it is said, were originally encroachments upon the Forest which remained unchallenged for so long a series of years that the occupiers acquired a freehold title. Besides the houses of the opulent there are divers cottages, the dwellers in which, from long custom, claim ownership; and as a legal process is required to remove the occupant of the cottage he has built and of which he has taken possession, the trespasser is extremely assiduous in building and moving in. Mr Gilpin, speaking of the New Forest, says, "I have known all the materials of one of these habitations brought together, the house built, covered in, the goods removed, a fire kindled, and the family in possession in the course of a moonlight night."

A moonlight *flit* is common in most countries, but this moonlight settlement must be a proceeding peculiar to the Forest.

All things must have an end—whether it be the great globe itself, or Nim South's rambling Tour—and the last day of the hunting season will come, and that I now approach. The first portion of my Tour was written in the Crown Inn, at Lyndhurst, and at Lyndhurst I thought to conclude my operations for the season: but "*Diis aliter visum est*," and on the 10th of May I left it for Salisbury or New Sarum (as the milestones designate it) in a rickety old gig drawn by a three-year-old Forest pony, and driven by a young swine-feeder who happened to be off duty. The Forest ponies were formerly in great repute, but the breed has degenerated much of late years, if I may judge by the specimen in the gig, for neither coaxing nor whip could persuade it into a canter for above twenty yards at a time. So long as the road lay through the Forest I was in no hurry, for the scenery was beautiful and the day fine; but when we reached the open downs I began to tire of the funeral pace, and conceiving it due to the driver's lack of coachmanship, took the reins out of his hand and set-to, as I thought, in earnest. I overrated my own abilities, for I brought that pony to a dead stand in less than five minutes; and finding myself in a predicament somewhat similar to that of the Irishman who travelled through the streets of Dublin in a sedan chair with the bottom out, I resigned the reins, or rather ropes, and abandoned the vessel altogether. I reached Salisbury about half an hour ahead of it, and having paid my respects to my horses in the excellent stables belonging to the White Hart Inn, went to church at the cathedral, the day being Sunday.

All abbeys, cathedrals, and large churches have some marvellous tale attached to them, either



Photo by Mr C. H. Mate.

In the New Forest near Lyndhurst Road.

real or imaginary, and at Salisbury the tradition is, that in consequence of the marshiness of the land, the foundation of the cathedral was laid upon wool-packs; a tale doubtless arising from the great traffic in that commodity. The following lines explain the component parts of the building:—

> "As many days as in one year there be,
> So many windows in our church you see:
> As many marble pillars there appear
> As there are hours throughout the fleeting year:
> As many gates as moons one year do view,
> Strange tale to tell, yet not more strange than true."

This of Salisbury is the *lightest* looking cathedral I have seen. Some think it slender to a fault. However much people may differ on that point, I saw several light airy feet and ankles tripping out of it after service, upon which no difference of opinion could exist.

In truth, I could have fancied myself in France; nor was the illusion diminished by finding on my return to the stable, a tall Don Quixote-looking Frenchman wearing ear-rings, a silver-laced hat, ill-made blue coat with a coronet on the button, dirty buff waistcoat, blue cloth breeches with plated buttons down the sides like overalls, and a pair of the most Palais Royal-looking apologies for top-boots I ever beheld. Monsieur was in a rage, and a Frenchman in a passion in an English stableyard is a fine animal. His wrath had been kindled by finding that only two horses out of three (for he drove unicorn) had been dressed by the ostler. Going up to the horse which had been left untouched, he commenced a volley of oaths in the orthodox style (*vide* Sterne), every one of which the animal seemed to comprehend, for it quailed under the touch of the huge Jehu: at

length leaving the stall and putting himself into a (French) pugnacious attitude, he addressed the ostler: "Sacré nom de Dieu, monsieur, vy you only brosh two horses? You brosh three horse, monsieur, dem, you do." "No," replied the ostler, "I have cleaned two, and you must clean t'other yourself." "No, pas du tout," rejoined monsieur, "you brosh oder horse, dem, I go Mass" —at the same time pulling out his watch. "D——n your master," said the ostler, "you may tell him what you like." "Oui, I go Mass tout suite," said monsieur, and he bundled off to church, leaving the horse untouched.

On inquiry I found he was coachman to the Duke Laval de Montmorency, Ambassador in this country during the administration of the unfortunate Polignac. The horses were English, but long slavery under this tartar had so accustomed them to his French oaths, that they had quite forgotten any English education they might have had in that line. The next morning when I went into the stable for my horse I found my friend harnessing in the true French style, swearing away at the horses and ostlers, and rejecting the assistance of the latter with the utmost disdain. At length settling time arrived, when he was monstrously puzzled about the hay and corn; after many attempts at explanation had been made in vain, he pulled a quantity of silver out of his pocket and holding it to the ostler said, "Here! tax, tax!" meaning, "Help yourself, you buffer." I did not wait to see the start, but heard that they had not proceeded above a mile or two on their journey before the leader's fore-shoes came off, and they were obliged to return to let the blacksmith "tax, tax." So much for French coachmen.

On the morning of the 12th of May, the last day of the season (at least for me), I took the road to Yarnbury Castle, about fourteen miles from Salisbury, to meet Mr Codrington's Hounds, who were going to wind up by trying for a rabbit-stealing fox said to infest those parts. I set out with no very sanguine expectations of sport, for Mr Codrington, whom I saw in the Forest, thought the odds were against our finding; nevertheless, having heard much of the excellence of his hounds, I caught at the chance of seeing them at all events. Names of both persons and things are apt to deceive, and lead us to form ideas and expectations very contrary to the reality. How often, for instance, on hearing the name of a person, we form a conception of his appearance which proves quite dissimilar to what we find him? And yet one can't tell the reason why. With inanimate things there is a smaller field for the exercise of imagination, a tree always being a tree, a river a river, a house a house, and, generally speaking, a castle a castle. To this rule, however, Yarnbury Castle is an exception, for in vain does the traveller look for battlemented towers, buttresses, portcullis, or drawbridge over the yawning moat. Here some mounds of earth (at present the site of a great sheep fair) in the centre of an extensive plain answers to the drowsy name of Yarnbury Castle.

Here it was that on the morn of the 12th of May a gathering of the sportsmen of many hunts took place to bid farewell to the sport until time should work round to another season. The country about was open, yet not bleak, a few straggling plantations (in one of which it was hoped to find the fox) served to break the monotony of an unenclosed country, and furnish shelter for the game.

The field was large; many came attracted by the hopes of sport, but more to learn Mr Codrington's decision about giving up the country, and the satisfaction which appeared on every countenance on hearing that the Master meant to continue in his own, sufficiently proved the esteem in which he is held. A longer time than usual elapsed after the arrival of the hounds ere we moved to throw off, which interval was spent in looking them over. Mr Portman, like myself, had been attracted from the Forest to the "Castle" to see them, but by a more laudable motive than curiosity, for he has just entered upon the management of the Blackmore Vale Hounds, and, of course, was anxious for the advice of so excellent a breeder as Mr Codrington. Mr Codrington holds, I believe, that "handsome is that handsome does," and on no account keeps a hound that has a fault, however slight. This, and hunting at the same time both dogs and bitches, has the effect of making his pack look more uneven than most; nevertheless in performance, I understand, they are not to be excelled. I was not fortunate enough to witness their exploits other than in drawing. The small plantations near the "Castle" drew blank, which caused many of the field to look the same; especially when it was announced that Grovely, one of the small three-thousand-acre covers of the Hunt, was the next to be drawn. There was no alternative except to go home, which many of the field did; the rest got scattered about the wood, and up to a late hour in the afternoon we had not a challenge. The game seemed up, though the fox was not, and arriving at Salisbury at ten o'clock the same night I took the mail home, leaving my horses to follow at their leisure.

My journey to Town was without either accident or incident, the only notable circumstance I can recall being receipt of nineteen half-sovereigns in change of a ten-pound note.

Here, then, I close my last season's Tour, expressing my gratitude to the Masters of Hounds and Members of the different Hunts in the West of England.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LORD LONSDALE'S (THE COTTESMORE).

(1831-1832.)

THE FLYING COUNTRIES—STAMFORD—THE HIGHFLYER COACH—WILKINSON OF DONCASTER—STEAMBOATS AND COACHES—HINTS TO COACH PROPRIETORS—THE NORTH ROAD—THE COCK AT EATON SOCON—BATES OF BIGGLESWADE—A DAY AT SEATON GORSE WITH LORD LONSDALE'S HOUNDS—THE STAMFORD BULL-HUNT—A DAY AT MARKET OVERTON WITH THE COTTESMORE—THE SOUTH LINCOLN MILITIA.

With the New Year I commence the record of my New Tour, first thanking my kind but invisible friend the public for its indulgence. The task of a tourist is more difficult than some may imagine, and few writers have shone very brilliantly in the character. One is eloquent on a beef-steak, another is grandiloquent on a gate; but that happy medium 'twixt profundity and frivolity, at which we all aim, few hit. Upon one point, however, we generally agree—viz., in making of circumstances and places a glorious hash wherewith to excite the risible faculties of well-informed readers.

Well may we, therefore, on the commencement of each fresh essay, entreat a merciful consideration of our errors. Well may I, in describing a gallop over an unknown country, expiate (by a prefatory supplication) my crime in relating how

the fox crossed farmer Dobbins's glebe, when every little dirty-nosed boy at Tommy Turner's twopenny school knows that that glebe is held by farmer Scroggins. Well may I endeavour to pacify the resident sportsmen of each country for attempting to usurp their privilege of recording how they drew "Hazelmere Copse down to Broxley Wood, and Broxley Wood over to Fox Thorp, and then from Fox Thorp to Middle Ford," &c. (as Mr Hood has it). Apologies are but common forms after all, and Mr Locke having given his opinion that, such is the diversity of tastes among mankind, it would be difficult to write a book which might not be pleasing to some one, I will e'en set out again on my travels, first premising that those whose patience I exhausted in my former Tours had better refrain from entering upon the new.

The two seasons which I have recorded were passed in what are called the "slow countries" or rurals, not because either the sportsmen or hounds are slower than their brethren in the flyers or hunting countries, but because the cultivation and soil are less favourable to sport and scent. Having graduated from the flints and fallows of Kent and Surrey to the grassy vales of Wiltshire, I arrive at length at the *ne plus ultra*—the seat of hunting. Determined to take time by the forelock, the season had not yet commenced ere I despatched my horses to Stamford, a flourishing town about ninety miles from London, conveniently situated where Lincolnshire, Rutlandshire and Northamptonshire meet, and within easy distance of Lord Fitzwilliam's and Lord Lonsdale's kennels; and on 13th November I set off myself by the Highflyer coach (a very proper one by which to travel to the

flying countries), which starts from the White Horse, Fetter Lane, at eight every morning. It is a heavy coach, running through either to Newcastle or Edinburgh, and, though steady, by no means "a flyer." I remember travelling up by it some seven or eight years ago, when that excellent coachman, Wilkinson, the present landlord of the Black Bull at Doncaster, used to take it out of York, and the pace he drove us along the road past Knavesmire was like racing compared to that of the ponderous Scott, who jehu'd us into the Minster city from the north. Wilkinson was a very superior coachman, and were similar men on the coach all the way through much time might be saved of that allowed for the journey between Newcastle and London. From the former place to York alone an hour might be gained.

The steamboats play the mischief with coaching on the North Road in summer, and if the proprietors wish to compete with them they must do the thing as expeditiously and reasonably as possible. For my own part I detest the sight of a steamboat, and would rather walk the distance at any time than travel by sea; but still the temptation of saving induces many people to hazard a voyage who would, perhaps, give the preference to the coach but for the disparity of cost.

Those to whom the certainty of arriving at their journey's end at a particular hour is important will always patronise the coaches, as also those who, like myself, are but indifferent sailors, especially after once experiencing the delights of a good storm at sea, for there is no stopping a steamboat as you can a coach to let a sick gentleman walk up a hill. I throw out these hints for the consideration of coach proprietors, for in the

present day coaches, like everything else, to ensure the public patronage, must "go the pace." All experience proves the truth of this assertion.

But to return to the Highflyer. We started with a team of piebalds, whose variegated hides were enough to excite envy in the breast of an Astley, driven by a very civil obliging coachman, who used to be on the Portsmouth road. The coach leaves London by Tottenham, Edmonton, &c.—one of the longest avenues of houses on any of the roads leading from the Metropolis. We changed coachmen at Hertford, and the new one had not been on the box very long before I recognised the identical man who drove the Poole Mail to some place near Alresford on the night that we had the "real gentleman" on the box, who made his shillings fly in so many directions, as related in my Tour in the New Forest.

On the subject of changing coachmen I may here call the attention of proprietors to a point which, though of no importance to them, is frequently of considerable consequence to the traveller who occupies the box-seat. I refer to the system which requires the coachman to find his own box-apron. A passenger with whom this protection has been shared for thirty or forty miles is suddenly exposed to the cold and wet if the man who had an apron is succeeded by one who has not. The latter may feel no inconvenience, but the sudden transition from warmth to cold, especially in damp weather and on long journeys, may prove very serious to the traveller. I therefore think the proprietors ought not only to find these aprons themselves, but insist upon the coachmen carrying them at all times. In these little minutiæ consists the comfort of travellers.

The north road is famous for good inns. The

Cock, at Eaton Socon, is one of the best in England, and there are few better coach dinners set out than at Bates's at Biggleswade. A good fire always burning, and a pretty maid to help one out of one's greatcoat. I have often dined both there and at Eaton Socon in bygone days when I *used* that country, as they say of a fox; but those days are past, and there has been a change of pretty maids since then. Bates, the landlord, who, judging from his size, often baits himself, horses the Highflyer from Biggleswade to Hertford, and until very lately acted as coachman over his own part of the road, and his horses had a rare holiday when he was on the box. More time was dribbled away in altering bearing-reins, letting out and taking up traces, &c., than in any hundred miles of the road, to say nothing of the snail pace at which they went when in motion. Men certainly will run to stomach—the late Stephen Kemble, for instance; but Stephen, with all his "too, too solid flesh" about him, was active. Those who are both heavy and inactive are not fit to be coachmen.

The Highflyer takes tea at the George in Stamford, where we arrived about half-past eight in the evening, and my horses being there, I was at home on the stopping of the coach, for that night at least.

One of the greatest difficulties I experience in the course of my Tours is finding out where the hounds meet. It is true that the county paper generally has them, but what information does it convey to a stranger to find that "Lord Blank's hounds meet at Blank gate at half-past ten on Wednesday" if one cannot find any person to tell where Blank gate is? If the groom goes into the stableyard to ask the ostler, the latter, of



Chas. Cooper Henderson.

The Way we should Go.

course, assumes that he wants a post-chaise, and names the utmost distance to the next posting-house; then one subtracts and the other adds—in short, they make a regular rule-of-three question of it. The saddlers' shops are the only places where anything like correct information is obtainable, but as these happened to be shut on the night of my arrival, I had no small difficulty in fixing upon the meet to which I should send my horse. At length Seaton Gorse, after advancing and receding in divers ratios in proportion to the ignorance or intelligence of the informant, was fixed upon as the most convenient, being, as I afterwards found (on the map of the country surrounding the Vale of Belvoir), about nine miles from Stamford, in the southern part of the county of Rutland, the whole of which is hunted by the Earl of Lonsdale's—the Cottesmore Hounds.

The next morning, 14th November, opened with a sharpish frost; nothing, however, to stop hounds, and about eleven o'clock a tolerably large field had assembled by the Windmill, in the neighbourhood of the Gorse. The venerable Earl, now in his seventy-sixth year, was out in his usual hunting costume, consisting of a black coat with velvet collar and gilt buttons, and leather breeches. He was attended by a clean, intelligent-looking groom in scarlet. The hounds were escorted by Lambert, the huntsman, and a couple of whips in scarlet coats and hats instead of caps, all admirably mounted. Seaton Gorse is one of the favourite covers of the Hunt—a reputed sure find, especially so early in the season—and the country round is open, with a fair share of plough and grass. In situation it somewhat resembles the favourite Applesham Gorse in Colonel Wyndham's country, one part occupying the side of a

tolerably steep hill. Like many "sure finds," however, it drew blank, as did Gunthorpe, a gorse a few miles to the north, and another situated about half-way between the two; and at two o'clock we were at Burleigh Park, a little to the east of Oakham. There are some very large covers in the neighbourhood, into which it was expected the hounds would be taken, but the weather becoming coarse and the wind boisterous enough to blow us out of our saddles, the Master thought it prudent to leave off, and hounds returned to the kennel at Cottesmore a few miles away.

On this day a celebrated Hunt took place in the town of Stamford; it was a Hunt which does not, perhaps, say much for the refinement of the age, but is curious as an ancient custom, and shows the inviolability of a charter. It is termed "bull running," and was instituted more than 600 years ago by some amateur bull-baiter who, enraptured at the sight of two beasts in fierce contest on what are called the Meadows of Stamford, bequeathed a piece of land for the purpose of finding annually a bull to be baited by the enlightened populace on the 14th of November. The custom has been kept up with great spirit; and like some fox-hunters, who estimate the merits of a chase by the number of falls they see, the bull-hunters think nothing of a bull that does not kill two or three people and maim half a dozen.

The late Marquess of Exeter tried to put a stop to this proceeding, but was unable to carry his point at law. The march of intellect, however, has made a little progress even in bull-baiting, and now the mob, instead of killing the animal themselves when fairly run down, take him to a butcher's to be slaughtered in the usual way.

As I rode to cover in the morning I met divers groups of countrymen and boys, armed with sticks and whips, on their way to Stamford, where most of the shops (the china ones in particular) were closed for fear of an unwelcome visit. Of course, being at the fox-hunt, I was absent, but I sent my groom back with my hack to see the "run." The sport, he informed me, commenced about noon by baiting the bulls (for on this occasion they had two) in the market-place. After being roused to a proper state of fury they were turned loose upon the populace, who pursued them all over the town. One got into the meadows, the other into the river, and two lads who went off in a boat had a narrow escape by the upsetting of it; indeed, they must certainly have been drowned had not a labourer jumped in at the risk of his life and saved them. Beyond this, and one or two others being run over and gored, there was very little sport, and both bulls were voted very bad. Formerly the mob used to lead them round to all the aldermen's houses after baiting as a delicate mark of attention; but on the present occasion this compliment was dispensed with.

There was a heavy shower of rain and sleet on the evening of the 14th, giving goodly promise for the next day's sport; but a severe frost set in towards morning, and my horse was hardly able to keep on his legs when I started at nine o'clock. Lord Lonsdale's hounds met at Market Overton, another favourite cover, in a good country a few miles from the kennel, but one which has the character of affording either very good or very bad sport. There was a large field again on this day, the fixture being convenient for the Meltonians, as well as those on the Lincoln-

shire side. We had a beautiful find in the wood beside Market Overton almost immediately on going into cover; and though there were plenty of foxes, unfortunately we got upon a ringing beast, who at length broke away, and after a two hours' run with but an indifferent scent, was killed where we found. The country was heavy and the fencing in some parts rather stiff, rendered more difficult by the rotten state of the ground, which was half frozen and half thawed.

I think if we had had a straight run and good scent (two very important "ifs" in fox-hunting), there would have been some lively competition among the riders, Quorn against Cottesmore; for the members of one Hunt like dearly to show off a little before the members of another. Among those out was Colonel Lowther, riding the horse which had recently given him a serious fall. His lordship was also again in the field. A true sportsman, he seems to take great pleasure in his hounds, which certainly are a beautiful pack. His huntsman has one fault—that very common one of not drawing his gorses closely. Some foxes will lie very close, especially in bad weather, and in thick covers require a deal of pushing up. I do not base this criticism on what I saw at Seaton and Gunthorpe, but on what I heard among sportsmen of the country. It certainly was observed by the whole field that the covers were very partially drawn, and it seems hardly possible that so early in the season in such gorses and in such a country there should be a lack of foxes. It is all very well for huntsmen to sit on the top of a hill and "Yoick, push him up!" to their hounds, but if they would dismount and yoick and *help* to push him up themselves, there would not be so many blank days. I should like to send

a few of them into Northamptonshire to see how the Squire pushes them up: he is a regular "stir 'em up with the long pole." I understand that these hounds had one of the most brilliant days ever known on the 22nd of November, but I was not able to obtain the particulars.

On 15th November, the South Lincoln Militia mustered at Stamford for permanent (so-called because it lasts for twenty-eight days) training under the command of Lord Brownlow and that indefatigable anti-reformer, Colonel Sibthorpe. The men were fine young country fellows, but when the authorities came to pitch the uniforms upon them the aim seemed to be the total abolition of uniformity. One man's legs would be half a yard through his trousers, while another wore a coat that would have held two men of his dimensions; and what with the mixture of military and agricultural attire, I doubt if Falstaff himself would have had courage enough to march them through Coventry. Of course, we had several of them billeted at the George—thirty privates and twenty of the "other sort," as the chambermaid described the officers who messed there. The presence of the latter was an advantage to me, as dining after them I escaped the old beef-steak, mutton-chop, mutton-chop, beef-steak story. I do not know how it is, but John Bull certainly has nothing of the military mania about him, and soldiers, with the exception of a few regiments of whacking dragoons, always skulk along as if they are ashamed of themselves, whereas in France every fellow—even the very postilion on the road—has a sort of rank-and-file appearance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LORD FITZWILLIAM'S.

A DAY WITH DR WILLIS'S HARRIERS AT ORNBY HEATH—A DAY WITH LORD FITZWILLIAM'S HOUNDS AT WALCOT PARK—STAMFORD AS A HUNTING CENTRE—THE BULL AND THE GEORGE INNS—BURLEIGH HOUSE—LORD EXETER'S CHARACTER IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.

On the 16th of November we had a slight fall of snow, and the weather still continued frosty, though, giving towards the middle of the day, it was not sufficient to stop hounds. There being no fox-hounds within reach, I met Dr Willis's harriers at Ornby Heath, about six miles from Stamford. I had often heard of them as exactly what a pack of harriers ought to be, and can truly say I never was so much pleased with any in my life. They were bred by the doctor, who is a liberal patron of field sports, from a few couple from the late King's and Lord Burghersh's kennels (the King's, I believe, having been originally purchased of Mr Loraine Smith), and the pack now consists of sixteen couple of as beautifully formed hounds as can possibly be seen—small, airy, and fast; and as well appointed and turned out as any pack in England. The day was very unfavourable, especially in the morning, and Dr Willis himself was not out; indeed, when I at length, having missed my way, came upon the

hounds there was no one with them save the huntsman and two grooms who act as whippers-in, all three riding excellent horses; for the doctor is a breeder of horses as well as hounds, as testified by the 'Racing Calendar,' wherein I am sorry he does not oftener appear as a winner. One of the grooms is a very good rider, and well worthy of a place with fox-hounds. We had a very pretty burst for about twenty minutes, and should have killed to a certainty, had not the hare taken through a village, after which it got so cold and was so late that we gave it up, especially as we were then near a large wood full of rabbits, where the Cottesmore were to meet on the following day.

The frost on the night of the 16th was sharper than ever, and the morning promised anything but hunting, but I determined to try it at all events, and at half-past nine was slipping and sliding up Stamford on my way to Walcot Park to meet Lord Fitzwilliam's Hounds. I had made their acquaintance some years ago, but absence and variety had almost effaced them from my memory. As I dawdled along, speculating on the probable success of the sun in breaking through the fog, I thought it more than probable that I should not renew my acquaintance on that day. The frost was very severe, and at eleven o'clock had every appearance of continuing. On arriving at Walcot Park—a large deserted stone mansion with the windows boarded up—I had the consolation of learning from the natives that they knew nothing of the hounds, and it was not until I found an old man breaking stones on the road that I could learn where they usually met. Being then above half-way to Milton, I decided to pursue my course to the kennel, and with that

intention had proceeded about two miles, when I espied in the distance one of the whippers-in, who announced that the hounds would be at Walcot at twelve o'clock; I therefore turned back with him to the meet. I learned on the road that they had had a capital run the day before, slap down into Northamptonshire; also that their northern country had shown unusually good sport, though attended by the usual ill-effects to the hounds which follow nights in posting stables and such places on the road.

A little after twelve the veteran Sebright appeared with his hounds, which, notwithstanding their recent experiences, were in very fair condition. He was riding a sporting-looking black, attended by two whips, both in scarlet with green velvet collars and black caps, also very well appointed. At this period the field numbered one other scarlet coat besides my own, a couple of blacks, two farmers' lads, and a butcher's boy; nor was there any appearance of more; so after a few minutes' chat we proceeded to draw the plantations belonging to the Park, where we found plenty of pheasants but no fox. Indeed, I understand that they oftener draw blank than the contrary, and Sebright was very soon on his way to another—a large gorse. This also was blank, and the afternoon was well advanced ere we had a challenge in a large cover, called the Hangers, but from which we were not successful in driving our fox. We had, however, some pretty cover hunting, interspersed, like a story with episodes, with an occasional scurry over the commons and opens, as also the full benefit of Sebright's most singular and soul-stirring screech. I have met with few huntsmen whose voices cannot be mistaken, but I think Sebright's would be

recognised amid a thousand. The holloa of Dick Burton, formerly well-known in Leicestershire during the reign of Mr Assheton Smith and Lord Southampton, approaches nearer to Sebright's than any I know, but is hardly so full or shrill. Sebright is powerful both in cover and the open, and ranks high among the huntsmen of the day. He is a very neat horseman, and not to be turned out of his way by a trifle; his style of taking the double ox-fences—those puzzlers to horses and terror to strangers—is deserving of study and imitation. The three whips are also active sporting-looking fellows; in fact, the whole establishment is decidedly first-rate.

Stamford as a hunting quarter is convenient enough when Lord Fitzwilliam's Hounds are at Milton; otherwise Oakham, a small quiet town midway between it and Milton, is better situated for Lord Lonsdale's and the Duke of Rutland's. There is an excellent inn and every accommodation for sportsmen. The Bull, at Witham Common, a stage beyond Stamford on the North Road, is also very conveniently situated for hounds, and the quarters are quiet and comfortable. My object being to pass through the hunting countries to the west of Stamford, I selected the latter as more in the line, and had no reason to regret my choice. The stables at the George are very good, and a man who is not an epicure will have little fault to find with the culinary department; being a coaching-house, of course, there are always a few good joints in circulation. The apartments are spacious; though the sitting-room I occupied, having a door at each end which opened into passages wherein the wind had license to sport, was rather more cool than comfortable in frosty weather. On a closer

inspection of the town, I afterwards found a very fine, large, well-built, stone hotel, so placed in a narrow street behind a church as to be completely hid from "the garish eye of day"; and there are either one or two others.

The town itself is clean and well situated; many of the churches are fine, but as their revenues, I was told, are far from considerable, the present incumbents have all to hope and little to fear from a reform in the Church. Burleigh House, the magnificent seat of the Marquess of Exeter, is the traveller's lion of Stamford; the park reaches to the entrance to the town, and occupies a large extent of land to the south. Few travellers, other than the blind, have passed along the North Road without being struck by the quantity of game to be seen feeding in the fields: I recollect a white pheasant that did good service to many a coachman pointing out the wonders of the place. I forgot to inquire what has become of the old bird, but as I rode to Walcot, the way to which lies to the north of the park, I saw several score of pheasants upon the stubbles. Though a preserver of game in the neighbourhood of his own mansion, Lord Exeter has several estates upon which he allows anybody to shoot without even a "king's permission," and I remember a gentleman telling me that he once sat by a coachman from Stamford who had the day before bagged his couple of brace of pheasants. I mention this to show that his lordship is not the arbitrary aristocrat a portion of the public press represents: after the tirades I had read in the newspapers it was rather surprising to discover that Lord Exeter is respected and beloved in his own district.

Johnson says, "The highest panegyric private

virtue can receive is the praise of servants," and it was not from the interested tradesman, or the perhaps equally interested tenant, that I heard these sentiments of esteem, but from all classes in that country, and among them "those who see him without restraint or rule of conduct, but such as he voluntarily prescribes to himself."

His lordship being at Burleigh House at the time of which I am speaking, of course I did not think of visiting it; for my own part, I think the only way of seeing a house to advantage is by making one at the dinner-table. After all is said and done, the inside of one great house is very much like the inside of another—a chair is a chair, and a sofa a sofa; and supposing a man to be a connoisseur in pictures, the pace at which the stranger is conducted from one apartment to another gives him only time for a glance. No, give me the bright mahogany, cheerful company, and a glass of ruby wine to drink many happy returns of this day to you and your friends.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BELVOIR AND THE QUORN.

MELTON MOWBRAY—BELVOIR CASTLE—THE DUKE OF RUTLAND'S HOUNDS AND THE VALE OF BELVOIR—LORD FORRESTER—THE GEORGE INN AT MELTON—"COMFORT"—EXPENSES OF MELTON—SIR HARRY GOODRICKE'S HOUNDS AT BROOKSBY—ANCIENT AND MODERN HUNTING COMPARED—SECOND HORSES—NEW KENNELS AT THRUSSINGTON—COMPANY AT MELTON.

From Stamford to Melton Mowbray is about twenty miles. I set off on horseback for the latter place on the —— of November in the agreeable company of a slight fall of snow. The business of the day consisting in the ride there and dinner after, I travelled at my leisure. Towards evening the weather turned very frosty, and for the last few miles my horse staggered about as though drunk. All the world knows that Melton is the seat of fox-hunting—the veritable abode of sport. It is a small neat town, standing upon the banks of the Eye, and owes everything to its situation, lying in the centre of a rich grass country, with fine large fields enclosed by practicable fences. With the exception of the church, which is one of the handsomest in that county, it possesses no feature of interest beyond the ordinary run of other small neat towns in any part of England where little or no trade is carried on. It appears to derive its name, or at least part of it, from

the original owner of property in the parish. A work, called the 'Rotuli Hundredorum,' published under the superintendence of the Record Commissioners, states that in 1275 Roger de Quincy Mowbray appropriated to himself six acres and a fishery; and in another work published by the same Society, 'Inquisitiones Post Mortem,' we find that "in 1433, John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, Lord Mowbray Segrave and Gower held the Manor," &c.

Night came on before I reached the town, and the moon rose in the dull haze which generally bespeaks a change of weather. My movements being uncertain, I had sent no intimation of my approach save that which would be given by my groom, who would only arrive a few hours before me. Consequently I could not expect much accommodation. However, I got a very comfortable bedroom and the use of a sitting-room, the owner whereof was absent for a few days. The frost continued very severe until midnight, but towards morning the weather changed, and at five or six o'clock a shower of rain made the roads sloppy at top and slippery at bottom. On a hunting morning Melton presents a scene unequalled in any other place. It opens with the departure of the grooms and lads, with first and second horses, for the different meets. An hour or so afterwards the streets are thronged with carriages of every description, while before the doors are led expensive cover-hacks, on which their owners every minute dash off with the rapidity of lightning. To be sure, the same thing may be seen in other hunting quarters, and the difference exists in the style of turn-out and the quality of the horses.

On this day Sir Harry Goodricke's hounds met

at Sex, or Segs, Hill [Six Hills ?], and the Duke of Rutland's at Croxton Park, both about equidistant from Melton. I chose the latter, and after several slips and slides, reached the park in safety; but the frost was still very severe on the high grounds, and there was no sign of hounds.

Riding about the park, I learned that they had been there, and gone back to some cover near Belvoir, whither I set off with all convenient speed, making direct for the kennel, as the likeliest place to obtain information. Belvoir Castle is most imposing, and I looked long in admiration. It far surpasses anything I have ever seen, either in England or abroad; at least, anything that is now deserving the name of a castle.

In the north of England there are modern farm-houses (nay, I believe also a Methodist chapel) called "castles." The word sounds well to southern ears, but the realities reveal a lamentable example of the misnomer.

Mr Curtis, author of a very useful publication, which, if continued as proposed through other counties, cannot fail of wide circulation, entitled 'A Topographical History of the County of Leicester,' describes Belvoir Castle as standing on the summit of a lofty eminence, and as by far the most splendid architectural ornament of which the county can boast:—

> The cliff upon which the castle is built is an abrupt termination of a lofty isolated hill, the chief component of which is a red grit-stone. The sides of the hill are formed into terraces at various heights, diversified with shrubs, whilst the base is covered with large forest trees, forming a complete woodland, which gives the castle a most imposing appearance, rearing its majestic turrets, as it were, from the midst of an immense forest. Looking at it, either in a sporting or a warlike point of view, its situation is most admirable. One side commands a prospect over the whole



J. P. Neale.

Belvoir Castle.

of the celebrated vale of Belvoir, which extends from near Grantham into the counties of Leicester, Lincoln, and Nottingham, while the other looks down upon the rich county of Leicester.

Mr Curtis says the original of the castle is involved in considerable doubt. Leland was of opinion that there was not one anterior to the Conquest; but after the Norman invasion the elevated situation of Belvoir was too important to escape notice in turbulent times when a Baron could secure his safety only by the strength of his habitation. The Conqueror granted it to his standard-bearer, who assumed the name of Robert de Belvedeir, and built his castle on the summit of the hill; and the tower, which now forms the centre of the present edifice, is supposed to be erected on the site of the original keep. At present it is one of the few places that looks better in nature than in a picture. In addition to its great natural capabilities, neither art nor expense has been spared to render it perfect. The present Duke of Rutland is reported to have expended £200,000 upon restoration after the castle was almost destroyed by fire in 1816, since when the present structure has been completed, surpassing the other in grandeur.

The Duke of Rutland, so long a Master of Fox-hounds, on his retirement from the field last season lent his hounds to Lord Forrester, until his son, the Marquess of Granby, attains his majority, which will not be for three or four years yet, and accompanied his loan with the magnificent subscription of £1200 a year, and the use of an excellent kennel, &c., lately erected.

On the day of which I am speaking the hounds had deserted the high country in which their fixture was situated and descended to the Vale,

attended by a very small field, Sir Harry Goodricke having the majority of followers that day. Even in the Vale the weather was desperately severe, there being a sort of raw moisture in the air, much worse than frost, and sport seemed quite out of the question. We found three or four foxes in succession in less than two hours—one at Long Clawson, which we lost almost immediately; another at Holywell, which had similar luck; a third at some cover very near to that in which we lost the second; and I left them picking out the scent after a fourth, going at what hackney-coachmen call "Parliament pace"—viz., about six miles an hour. The hounds, however, did their work well.

The Duke of Rutland's hounds have long stood pre-eminent, and the excellent hands to which he has confided them secures a continuance of their fame. Lord Forrester takes little part in hunting them, leaving the horn to Goosey; but his skill and nerve as a horseman are not to be surpassed. The Vale of Belvoir is a formidable country. Moreover, the plough has made sad inroads, and the old sportsmen say it is "nothing like what it was in their day."

The only drawback in a hunting tour, barring the expense, is the miserable accommodation one occasionally finds at the pot-houses of inns; and yet a man has no right to complain, seeing that the evil is of his own seeking. Good accommodation where met with deserves mention, and I have no hesitation in saying that of all the hotels I have ever been in I never found greater comfort than in the George at Melton. Thousands eclipse it in outward appearance, but for real snugness it is not to be surpassed.

It is an old and true saying that the French



Sir Francis Grant, R.A.

Thos. Goosey and some favourite Hounds.

From the picture at Belvoir Castle. By permission of H.G. the Duke of Rutland.

language contains no word synonymous with "comfort," and no word in our own is so frequently misapplied. One man thinks it comfortable to have two clean shirts a week, another talks of having about him when he travels his little comforts, consisting of a crust of bread in his pocket, and a sheet of whitey-brown over his chest; a third considers a carpet at his bedside the height of luxury; while the whole ideas of a fourth are centred in a good smoking-hot dinner, consisting of a "cut-and-come-again" sort of joint, with a cigar after it, in a large room to swear in.

Fox-hunters, however, generally understand the thing as well as any men. Mr Burbridge, the landlord of the George, is a sportsman himself, a good one too, and consequently he knows how to make his guests comfortable. In the first place, the house is kept delightfully warm, and every room is furnished with its easy-chair or sofa. In the second, there is an excellent cook, and what is still better, no trouble in ordering dinner, the simple saying that you "dine at home after hunting" procuring a well-served dinner, with plate as bright and linen as clean as at the table of the best private house in the kingdom; and last but not least, the charges are extremely moderate. Indeed, it appears to me that the idea of Melton being a very expensive place is mistaken. It is very true that the present system of hunting requires a somewhat large stud to make a regular appearance in the field; but neither what the horses nor their owners consume in the way of eating is more costly there than at most other hunting quarters—or indeed at watering places. Let us inquire, in the first place, what is the expense of a man's den. I saw a capital

bedroom and sitting-room, with a servant's bedroom and pantry, or whatever you call it, adjoining on a first floor, where no children were allowed, for thirty shillings a week, cooking included; a sum less by ten shillings a week than I used to pay at Brighton for apartments of a similar character. As to stabling, it is well known that the average charge for stabling there is half a crown a stall per week, at which price stalls are to be had all over Melton.

Moreover, I am for every man who leaves home for the sake of hunting going to Melton once at all events, if only to escape the insufferable nuisance of hearing those who have been there continually dinning in his ears that it is the only place in England worth hunting from.

Every man of experience will agree that it is not *number* of horses that shows sport. Many of my acquaintances, who, commencing life with their two or three hunters, and gradually increasing them to eight or ten, have confessed that they have never been so well carried, or seen so much sport as with the smaller number; and I think that with four good seasoned hunters no man need be afraid to take a peep at Melton Mowbray.

The stable would undoubtedly be short when compared with those of many others—Lord Alvanley's, Lord Plymouth's, Lord Gardner's, or Sir Harry Goodricke's, for instance, who, judging from the numbers they keep, might be supposed to vie with Ducrow in his equestrian feats; but the weight and bruising riding of some of them might lead one to think that a hunter, like a pair of kid gloves, was only meant to be used once. Nevertheless, provided a man is contented with a middle rank, he will not have much to fear with

the stud I have named in the course of two or three weeks; and even should things go hard with him, he can always sneak off to Leicester and nobody be a bit the wiser.

On 21st November I met Sir Harry Goodricke's hounds at Brooksby, and a larger or better appointed field I never saw. The fixture was a mile or two on the Leicester side of the well-known Kirby Gate, chosen by Alken to represent "the Meet," and the scene closely resembled the picture. There was the carriage-and-four of one noble earl, the phaeton of another, the buggy of Sir John This, and tilbury of Squire That, with scores of the "neatest cover-hacks in England," as Ackermann says of his in that clever production called 'My Stud,' lately ushered by him into the sporting world. A cover side in Leicestershire certainly surpasses all expectation as far as fine horses are concerned, though I have seen hounds that I like better than Sir Harry Goodricke's. In truth, however, it would be unfair to pass an opinion upon a pack newly put together, and with the Duke of Rutland's faultless pack fresh in my mind's eye. Still there is something in old associations and connections, and many sportsmen think the hounds Sir Harry purchased of Lord Petre ill supply the place of those he parted with (to Mr Russell of Warwickshire, I believe), which consisted chiefly of Lord Southampton's purchases from Lord Tavistock when the latter nobleman resigned the Oakley country. Sir Harry was unfortunate in his début as Master of Hounds, losing the services of that excellent huntsman, George Mumford, who has been laid off the whole season from a throat complaint, brought on, I believe, by halloaing and over-exertion; for though Will. Derry, formerly whipper-in to Mr Musters,

is a very endeavouring sort of fellow, Mumford must continue to be missed.

Without much dallying, the field, then consisting of from three to four hundred horsemen, crossed the Leicester road, where hounds drew two or three slips of wood; then we proceeded to Cheam, where, from a large thick gorse three foxes went away almost simultaneously. Great was the halloaing and confusion, and little the wonder that we soon lost, though we went far enough to allow opportunities for three or four gentlemen to part company with their horses, which they did with great ease to themselves and amusement to the field.

The quick work made of losing the first fox caused a repetition of that finest of scenes, "a struggle for a start," and a beautiful one we had from a wood near where we lost, over what may be called the cream of Leicestershire for five-and-thirty minutes with only one check, going at times best pace over the fine grass enclosures by Great Dalby, Little Dalby, and towards Leesthorpe, beyond which we lost. A check at one of the Dalbys let the fox get too far before the hounds, and, being headed, he passed back almost in a line with their direction. This I happen to know, having been fool enough to take a line of my own, to avoid waiting a turn at a great rasping bullfinch, followed by about twenty others, till we found ourselves admiring the adjacent country from the wrong side of a stiff ox-fence, with a yawning drain at the far side. It was not a moment for reflection, and being the leader of the party I felt it a point of honour to go on; and, thanks to a previous fall which made my horse monstrous careful of himself, we landed safe in the next field, just in front of the fox, who was



"WE LANDED . . . JUST IN FRONT OF THE FOX."

travelling with his tongue out as hard as he could go; so near was he that had his throat been wide enough we should certainly have jumped down it. I halloaed and halloaed, but the hounds were running best pace; so thinking there might be another fox on foot, and I might draw down the curses of the field upon my devoted head if I caused any mistake, I e'en rode on as hard as I could, and came up with hounds just in time to see them make a fruitless cast forward.

Here let me warn all tyros to be cautious how they make use of their voices in Leicestershire; it is at best an unprofitable speculation. If right, nobody thanks them; but if wrong—by Jove they "catch it," as we used to say at school! One great thing in Leicestershire, this season particularly, is that if hounds do lose their fox, they can soon find another. There is, therefore, little occasion for hunting a cold scent by way of eking out the day. The distance we had covered and the pace made several of the dons and first-flight men look about for their second horses, which, like an army of reserve, follow within sight.

This, perhaps, is the most striking feature in Leicestershire hunting; for though practised in other countries, it is nowhere in vogue to the same extent. I believe the second horse was introduced by Lord Sefton when he hunted the Quorn, and, what was perhaps matter of necessity with him, has become the custom of the day. Nay, I am told that horses have been sent to points remote from the meet of the pack with which the owner is going to hunt, on the chance of their running that way, or in case of things not going right with one pack to join in with another.

What would our forefathers, with their early habits, their powdered cues, and high-crested cobby horses (calculated to go for ever), say to the system of the present day, when the meet is near their old dinner hour, and the evening commences about their supper time? I can imagine one of these venerables at a cover side in Leicestershire standing mute with astonishment as the field suddenly vanished from his sight, while the well-mounted whip left not a hound behind. And yet, after all is said and done, I should not be surprised if the old gentleman were to look with ineffable contempt upon this modern system, and denounce it as far inferior to the doings of his day, when the fox was roused before he had digested his evening meal, and pursued for hours with deep-voiced, slow-stringing hounds, accompanied by the shouts of the hunters and the music of the horn. Two horses then constituted a stud, and clipping and shaving were unheard of. Now the lightest weight must have his two in the field at least, and after going at a racing pace for a few miles he pulls up with "Oh, this horse is tired—this horse is tired! Bring me a fresh horse—bring me a fresh horse!"—just as he would call for a clean plate at dinner.

A great deal of this, it may be observed, is all flash and humbug, for though it may be very necessary for heavy men, of which Leicestershire has always some first-raters, yet in the next county, Northamptonshire, quite as difficult to get over, even the Master, Osbaldeston, whose horse has more work than that of any other man in the field, as he hunts the hounds himself, makes "one a day serve him," as Mr Meynell called to the man who was near killing a second hound.

Sir Harry Goodricke's accession to the Quorn

Mastership was hailed with satisfaction by the landowners and sportsmen of the country. His great popularity in private life, his high character as a sportsman, aided by his magnificent fortune, all contributed to give an air of permanency and substantiality to the establishment, which the later proceedings of Lord Southampton's reign had tended a little to shake. The removal of the kennel from Quorndon to Leicester, and the expense his lordship was at in building new ones there, as also in fitting up and adding to a house of which he took a lease for five years, and converting the bazaar into stables, were hailed with satisfaction by the good people of Leicester, while they created quite a different sensation in the breasts of the Meltonians.

Until then Quorndon Hall had, I believe, been the residence of the Masters of the Quorn Hounds ever since the days of that great sportsman, Hugo Meynell, under whose auspices Leicestershire became the prince of hunting countries. Mr Meynell purchased Quorndon somewhere about the year 1750 of Earl Ferrers, since when it has been successively occupied by Lords Sefton and Foley, Mr Thomas Assheton Smith, Sir Bellingham Graham, Mr Osbaldeston, and Lord Southampton. In 1830 the last-named gave it up, and, removing the hounds to a temporary kennel at Mount Pleasant, near Loughborough, built a complete set of new ones at the back of his house in the Humberstone Gate, Leicester, of which the pack had scarcely taken possession ere his lordship resigned the country.

I happened to arrive in Leicestershire when these arrangements were going on, and saw Lord Southampton's horses and hounds, which at that time formed a magnificent establishment. Mum-

ford was his huntsman ; indeed it was Lord Southampton who brought him into the country, taking him with the hounds which he got from Lord Tavistock, and superseding Dick Burton, who was a pupil of Mr Assheton Smith. It is always the fashion to worship the powers that be, but still Lord Southampton is well entitled to the gratitude of the sportsmen of Leicestershire for the liberal manner in which he conducted the establishment necessary to hunt such a country as Leicestershire.

Sir Harry Goodricke, doing the thing liberally without any subscription, has changed the name of the pack, and leaving both the Quorn and the Leicester kennels to take care of themselves, has built a capital new set, with stabling at the village of Thrussington, about six miles from Melton and eight from Leicester, at an expense, it is said, of between £3000 and £4000. The hounds are now known as Sir Harry Goodricke's.

In my Tour through Hampshire I mentioned that the mangers in Mr Assheton Smith's stables were made of blue slate, at which horses will not crib. Sir H. Goodricke has adopted a similar plan, having several made of stone, and so thick that a horse cannot lay hold of them. I have an idea that this will be found a surer preventive than all the sheepskins and straps and anti-crib-biters that ever were invented. I have a horse in my stable now that was terribly addicted to cribbing, and set at nought all the remedies. By chance he got into a stable where the top of the manger was covered with iron. He soon discovered this was too hard for his teeth, and after a few attempts he gave up the practice.

The Melton men consider Thrussington the best situation these hounds have ever occupied, being

about the centre of the country, while it is also very accessible from Leicester, which latter place has the advantage of commanding the Harborough country without sending horses out overnight. Melton, however, must always rank first as a hunting quarter. The very appearance of the place bespeaks its sporting nature, free as it is from the smoke, spinning-jennies, and bobbinette-making of the neighbouring places. This season, perhaps, the society is on a better and more permanent footing than ever before, owing not a little to the numerous and increasing list of the ladies who grace the place by their presence. Lady Wilton accompanies her husband (who by judicious alterations and additions has made a most delightful residence), as do Lady Edward Thynne, Lady Stormont, Mrs Drummond, and Mrs Loyd, among others.

The character of Melton has undergone a great alteration for the better of late, chiefly owing to the acquisition of female society. Gambling is now almost unheard of. As to drinking, men who hunt five or six days a week soon find the two incompatible.

The old club at present consists of Mr J. Moore, Sir J. Musgrave, Mr Maher, and Lord Forrester. When I was there Sir Harry Goodricke, Mr Gilmore, and Lord Gardner were keeping house together; Mr Stanley and Mr Errington (brothers) were doing the same, as also Lords Alvanley and Rokeby. In addition to these were Lord Kinnaird, two Mr Maxwells and Mr Fairfax, Mr White, Mr Ewart, Lord Plymouth at Melton Lodge, Lord Robert Grosvenor at Lord Wilton's, Lord and Lady Sarah Ingestre, Sir John Kaye, and Colonel Drummond at Leicester; while Oakham, Gran-

tham, and the neighbouring places have their visitors. In short, fox-hunting seems to flourish when everything else decays. Amid all the Reform Bills, riotous assemblages, stagnation of trade, and cholera morbuses, it pursues the even tenour of its way, apparently impregnable to all evils. Long may it continue so.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PYTCHLEY AND THE ATHERSTONE.

LEICESTER AS HUNTING CENTRE—MARKET HARBOROUGH—A DAY WITH MR OSBALDESTON'S HOUNDS AT ARTINGWORTH—"THE SQUIRE," THE LION OF THE COUNTRY—HIS PERSON AND DRESS—AS A HORSEMAN—THE 200 MILES RIDE AT NEWMARKET—A DAY WITH THE ATHERSTONE AT DUNTON BASSET.

LEAVING Melton I proceeded to Leicester to recruit my horses, and arrange my further movements. Leicester is a very disagreeable place in bad weather, such as I had the misfortune to encounter, but in that respect it is not singular. The frost had been succeeded by a dull close atmosphere, with a continual threat of rain. I took up my quarters at the Bell in the Humberstone Gate, a very excellent house, where I was lord of all I surveyed, for there was not another soul in the place. The more's the pity, for, independent of the stabling attached to the inn, the landlord rents the Bazaar, which Lord Southampton converted into excellent accommodation for thirty or forty hunters. The season of 1830-31 had been pretty favourable to Leicester, in consequence of his lordship taking up his abode there; but all hopes of establishing it as the first hunting quarter vanished on Sir Harry Goodricke taking the country. It is, however, conveniently situated for hounds, standing in the very centre of

the country. It commands the Melton and Market Harborough countries to the north and south, and the finest part of the Atherstone on the west, their extreme cover in that direction, the celebrated Enderby and Whetstone Gorse, being within a very few miles of the town, added to which the Pytchley are accessible now and then for those who do not mind twenty miles to cover, a distance which no fox-hunter ought to regard.

Notwithstanding all this, however, it is but a jenny-spinning sort of place, and the pale emaciated cheeks of the inhabitants contrast badly with the robust appearance produced by rural labour. The principal manufacture is that of stockings, and Mr Curtis, one of the historians of the county, says that so many as twenty thousand dozen have been made in one week. There are few places, however destitute of beauty, natural or artificial, that the pliant genius of a guide-book maker will not convert into something worthy of the traveller's attention. Whatever of interest Leicester possesses is derived from history, for there are few towns of equal size in the kingdom containing less of present attraction; and the jail—a place of which the most desirable view is always obtained outside—and the assembly rooms—whose chief attractions ought to be within—are the only two buildings that convey any idea of the size and importance of the town. The inns are numerous, the Crowns and the Bell as good as any in the kingdom, as I can affirm from personal experience. When there in 1830 I stayed at the former, and having this time given the other a trial, was very well pleased.

When I left home I had sketched out my Tour from Leicester to Lichfield by Ashby de la Zouch, and then down through Warwickshire; but learn-

ing that the great Osbaldeston was within twenty miles, a few days after reaching Leicester I sent my horses down to Market Harborough, and having once forsaken my line I never recovered it again. Having in a subsequent part of my Tour met with several gentlemen who considered Market Harborough a desirable situation for hunting, I may as well describe my experience, first premising, however, that I was there for only a couple of nights. It stands on the confines of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, about eighty-three miles from London on the mail road, and contains a good wide street with a few barbers' poles sticking out, a town hall, and a large church. It is memorable as having been the headquarters of Charles I.'s army previous to the battle of Naseby in June 1648, and of Nim South previous to hunting with Osbaldeston on the 25th of November 1831. Where Charles "kept" I don't know, but I stayed at the Three Swans, where though the stabling was very fair, the accommodation would not bear comparison with that either at the George at Melton, or the inns at Leicester, and a fastidious man would do well to take up his quarters elsewhere. Still, for one who is not over nice and has no objection to rough it for the sake of a good day's sport, there is nothing to complain of, all the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life being procurable.

On 25th November Mr Osbaldeston's Hounds met at Arthingworth, the seat of Captain Spalding, about four miles south of Market Harborough; and the morning, though not perhaps the more favourable for sport on that account, was one of the brightest, clearest, and mildest we have had this season. I rode on at my leisure, reckoning upon the half-hour's law generally allowed when

hounds meet in front of a gentleman's house, and found myself in ample time at eleven o'clock. Hospitality appears to be the rule in some countries and not in others. There are those in which a man would as soon think of flying as allowing hounds to meet at his house without having breakfast ready for all who like to partake of it; while in others they would as soon think of flying as having any except for themselves. Though one a day is sufficient for any man, I confess I like to see it, thinking this one of the few vestiges of the hospitality of our forefathers, and I was glad to see a man of Captain Spalding's standing faithful to so good a precedent. It is by these little courtesies that life is rendered agreeable, and were the expense ten times what it is, the money would be well spent. Whether it was the inducement of a good breakfast or the hopes of a good run, I know not; but the field that mustered on this occasion was numerous, and, save for two gentlemen in red coats and white hats, very sporting in appearance. It is said that one of them on a subsequent day was accused by Mr Osbaldeston of having frightened the fox with his hat, and, if the hat contained anything beyond a mere skull, the owner would doubtless discontinue it for the future. Had such a thing taken place in any of the London hunts, it would have been blazoned all over England, but in the flying countries they are not particular about the shade of a hat.

The Squire, as he is called, was then the great lion of the country, having but recently accomplished his feat at Newmarket, and people flocked from far and near to obtain a glimpse of him; and though we are apt to suppose that every person is equally acquainted with what is familiar

to ourselves, I dare say there are yet many thousands who would rather see Mr Osbaldeston than any other man in the kingdom. He is, in point of labours, a sort of modern Hercules, and his name will live when those of greater men are forgotten. As a sportsman Mr Osbaldeston stands unrivalled, no matter what the game. *Carpe diem quam minime credula postero* seems to be his motto, and in "summer's heat and winter's cold" he is ever employed. What an active life is his! He has hunted all the best countries in England — Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, part of Warwickshire, and had a turn in Hampshire with the Hambledon. By hunting a country I do not mean finding the wherewithal, and simply acting the *Magnus Apollo* of the field, like many Masters, but actually hunting the hounds, a task many have attempted and in which but few have succeeded. No days have ever been too long for him, or have they been too many. "Good stuff," they say, "is put up in small bundles," and this is the case with Osbaldeston. Under middle stature, he has the strength and pluck of two single gentlemen rolled into one. His hunting-cap, though doubtless very warm and easy to the head, does not give that finish to his equipment that might be expected in so perfect an artist, having the appearance of a cross between what our forefathers called a "dasher" and a modern jockey cap. The rest of his garb is sporting without any useless finery—a single-breasted coat, double-breasted waistcoat, cords, &c.

It was past eleven before we quitted the lawn in front of Arthingworth, but the cover was very near (a mile or so to the north), and we had plenty of daylight before us. I forget the name of the

gorse, but it lies on a hillside. Rather a curious thing happened: everybody who has hunted with, or been in the company of, Osbaldeston is acquainted with his strange rattling way of talking; and those that are not have only to refer to his letter in 'Bell's Life in London,' respecting his match, for an excellent specimen of his style. Well, it so happened that on this day the Quorn Hounds met at Langton Cauldwell, in Leicestershire, within sight of the gorse we were to draw, so that the contending armies were ranged on either side; and Osbaldeston, pointing out the windmill at which the Quorn met, observed that he should like to find his fox and go slap away up to it, and kill just before them as they were yelping about just finding theirs. Scarcely had he spoken the words before a hound challenged, and in a few seconds a gallant fox broke away from the low end of the gorse, and went straight as an arrow to the very place. All his wish was not granted, however, for the fox was lost, and the Quorn, having drawn their cover blank, had retired before we reached it.

The first part of the run was beautiful, over large grass enclosures, and at a very good pace; but after he crossed the Welland the scent seemed to fail, and, a good deal of time being lost at a confounded nasty brook shortly after, the fox gained considerably on the hounds, and lived to be hunted back by Sir Harry another day. Osbaldeston rode Pilot, one of his best horses, I believe, and I shall never forget the beautiful manner in which he put him to a leap just at starting. Taking him back several yards into the field, he went at it as hard as he could drive; indeed nothing but the impetus could have carried him through, for it was a stiff fence with a wide

brook on the other side and very indifferent landing. Nevertheless Pilot carried him triumphantly over.

Still, I should say that Osbaldeston is not fond of rasping, and I have seen him looking into his fences rather in the magpie-and-marrow bone fashion. Doubtless, like all men, he has some horses with which he can take greater liberties than others, and we know that a large page of the chapter of accidents has fallen to his share in the course of his bustling life.

His Newmarket match certainly was a most surprising performance, and stands unrivalled in the annals of human exertion. Had I been a betting man I should certainly have laid against his doing it in the nine hours, and, I think also, against his doing it in the ten. Of course, now it is over and the result has justified his confidence, there are plenty of wiseacres who were certain of it before; but having been at Newmarket during the whole of the second October meeting, I know what the opinion was then among people who know anything about riding. Every one allowed that it was nothing for the horses, but admitted that it was a great task for the rider. Colonel Charritie, who made the match, though a very knowing fellow, had not the practical experience that would enable him to make anything like an accurate estimate of human endurance; for though a very good man to ride a two-mile race with a few hurdles, he has never done much in the way of field sports, whereas there is none from the break-neck steeplechase to the tranquil amusement of fly-fishing in which Osbaldeston has not indulged. Two hundred miles in ten hours, he says, is nothing to do; but putting on the extra steam of six miles an

hour tries the wind and strength; and yet, in his subsequent challenge to the sporting world, he offers to take ten to one in thousands that he will ride two hundred miles in eight hours, which, as far as I have heard, has not yet been accepted. Indeed I should be sorry if it were, for until his Newmarket feat is equalled there is no occasion for him to do more, and a man may take a ride of this sort once too often. Osbaldeston cannot be spared from the sporting world.

Talking of challenges, how could any paper or periodical insert such an absurdity as that proposition to Osbaldeston, containing, among sixteen others equally sensible, one "to hop him a hundred yards"; another to "run him a hundred miles along the road"; [1] and, "winding up," as the writer expressed himself, "by offering to produce a cart-horse, not more than fourteen hands high, that should walk, trot, and gallop any cart-horse that he could produce, of whatever age and size he might be."

To return to the chase. Losing our first fox at Langton Cauldwell, we went away through a place very appropriately named Foxton, where, in a cover partly gorse and partly wood, about five miles along the Lutterworth road to the left, we soon found a brace; but after several attempts could make nothing of either, and went to a third, where, in a gorse at one end of a plantation, the Squire, going in on foot, succeeded in stirring up a fine fellow, who made his exit without much ado, and gave us a good twenty minutes' scurry in the direction of the Northampton road, where, in the grounds belonging to a large red house with

[1] Osbaldeston had been permanently lamed by the accident in March 1821, when Sir James Musgrave rode over him and broke his leg. Hence the absurdity. E. D. C.

wings, the shades of night came over, and the shrill horn announced the finish of the day. It was a long day and a severe even to me, who, having only gone a few miles to cover in the morning, had to return after hunting, and, moreover, would be out the next day at Great Harrowdin, and on the following at Sywell Wood. But what is that to a man who will ride through half England in a day? I saw Osbaldeston at a meet of the Warwickshire Hounds on a subsequent day at Ladbroke. As he got off his hack, having ridden some five-and-twenty or thirty miles, a gentleman observed that he supposed he had had an hour's work already.

The fame of Jack Stevens is so great that I can say nothing that will add to it. He is one of the finest horsemen in England, and well worthy to whip-in to so distinguished a sportsman. The second whip is also an excellent fellow. In short, for the real science of hunting, for real sportsmen, and having real sport, commend me to Mr Osbaldeston and Northamptonshire. He combines the pleasant drollery of a Nicol with the determined perseverance of—my subject might be debased by comparison—an Osbaldeston.

On the 25th I sent a horse on to Lutterworth, a small town on the Warwickshire side of Leicestershire, to meet the Atherstone Hounds at Dunton Basset on the following day. This was Mr Applewhaite's first season as Master of Hounds, and he is an excellent example for other aspirants. In the field he is quiet, agreeable, and gentlemanly, leaves the work entirely to his men, whom he puts on good horses. The consequence is that he has shown more sport this season than half the other packs in England. A very large landed proprietor in that Hunt has stated that he con-

siders him the best Master they have had in that country for some time. The huntsman, Robert Thurlow, and the first whip, Jesse, both lived with Lord Anson, as also with Sir John Gerard the season the latter hunted, or rather attempted to hunt. Whatever might be Sir John's failings in the field, he had one quality that should redeem all deficiencies: he put his men upon horses as good as he rode himself, and when he came to reduce his establishment there was no one horse he would keep in preference to another. Mr Applewhaite does not do the thing quite so magnificently, at which every one must rejoice, as it affords better prospect of a continuance; but the horses are quite up to their work, and better than two-thirds of the servants' horses in England. The second whip is a lad known by the name of Henry, and, like the other two, is a very fair rider. None of them carry much flesh.

Dunton Basset is considered within reach from Leamington, and so it is from London if people would start at night, which is the usual practice of those who set out from the former place. The thing is done sometimes, as I can vouch, though on the present occasion I slept the preceding night at the Denbigh Arms in Lutterworth, as I would advise others to do in preference to the inn at Rugby. From the former the gorse is only four or five miles distant on the road to Leicester, and hounds meet within a quarter of a mile of the draw, which is generally reckoned a sure find. From the difficulty of keeping the foot people (and some of the horsemen at times) in anything like order, and the size and thickness of the gorse, foxes are not very easily got away, but when they do, a good run is generally the result.

On the present occasion it was a wretched scenting day, but what with the natural perseverance of the pack, and a little lifting from the huntsman, we had a very pretty thing, and ran to earth at Cesters. Afterwards, drawing round by Lord Denbigh's, we concluded the day without finding a second fox, and with every appearance of a snowstorm. A slight fall there was, but so trifling as scarcely to deserve the name. Indeed in a letter I recently received from a friend in that county, he mentions that up to the end of February, these hounds had only been stopped two days during the season, and that the sport throughout had been in the highest degree satisfactory.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LEAMINGTON.

(1831-1832.)

A PROPHECY CONCERNING LEAMINGTON—A DAY WITH SQUIRE OSBALDESTON'S AT DUNCHURCH—CURIOUS LACK OF MEMORY IN A HORSE—NIMROD ON LEAMINGTON AND WARWICKSHIRE—"WATERING-PLACE FOX-HUNTERS"—MEETS ACCESSIBLE FROM LEAMINGTON—FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE WARWICKSHIRE HUNT.

"The wag of all wags is the Warwickshire wag."—Popular Song.

In the autumn of 1830 I read a letter headed "Fox-hunting Establishment at Leamington," wherein the writer expatiated in terms on the advantages of the place. After alluding to the benefit the town is likely to derive from the removal of the Warwickshire Hounds to a kennel in the immediate neighbourhood, he says: "I have no hesitation in saying that in a very few years, if not the very next winter, this place will vie with Melton Mowbray, if it does not totally eclipse it. Indeed, I prognosticate that this will be the case at no distant period; for although this must, as a fox-hunting country, always yield the palm to Leicestershire, yet who will spend a winter in Melton who can have such very superior society, comfort, and accommodation in Leamington, with a country second to none but Leicester-

shire ?" And then a little further on the writer observes of the country: "From what I have seen and heard of this country I am convinced it requires good nags to cross it, and those who can ride forward and straight will not only get great credit, but may, if they are disposed to sell their *prads*, make a great price of them; for if they can go here, where the fences are more difficult than in Leicestershire, they can go anywhere."

Now this astounding account would make a man pause ere he entered so trying a country. I had got through Rutlandshire, Leicestershire, and the Vale of Belvoir without being either frightened or hurt, but Warwickshire seemed to be quite a different thing; and when I found myself at Lutterworth, on the confines of this most difficult country, I thought it time to stop and inquire whether or not I was prepared for more than I had already encountered. Thus I sat musing one Saturday evening at the Denbigh Arms without a soul to speak to, and that terrible day, Sunday, awaiting me. Hard work and the heavy state of the countries through which I had passed had fined the carcasses of my horses a little, added to which I had one with a sore back, another with an over-reach, and a groom with rheumatism. Taking all things into consideration, therefore, I determined to send my horses to Leamington and join them after an interval of a fortnight, when they should be all right again. So without more ado I got into the mail, and breakfasted in Town.

Independently of the letter I have quoted, I had heard a great many, who passed for knowing fellows and sportsmen, talk of the local advantages of Leamington as a hunting quarter, and,

like young Norval, I longed to partake of its pleasures. Accordingly, after receiving a favourable report of my horses, I lost no time in repairing thither. Three packs of fox-hounds in the immediate neighbourhood naturally made me rather careless about ascertaining beforehand with which I should hunt the first day. Therefore I merely wrote that I should want a horse at the nearest meet on the morning of my arrival, thinking to take it rather quietly the first day, as I should be travelling all the preceding night.

About half-past seven one morning, about mid-December, I found myself turned out of the mail into a street which for size and stucco might, in the grey dawn of morning, have passed for a bit of Regent Street, or at all events a slice of the West Strand. There my groom informed me that the only pack of hounds within reach was Mr Osbaldeston's at Dunchurch, which, if lucky in finding the way, was a twelve miles' ride. I thought at first there must be some mistake, especially as it was a day when all the packs go out, but found to my sorrow that I had to choose between that distance and a greater one to meet the Atherstone, the Warwickshire being beyond reach in the available time. Indeed as it was I had none to spare. Therefore repairing to Copp's spacious inn, after considerable difficulty I made the chambermaid understand that I wanted a room in which to dress and not to sleep; and having made a hasty change of apparel, I mounted my hack and rode off for Dunchurch. My evil genius, however, was abroad that morning, and a scarlet coat catching my eye at the turn of a road, I stupidly followed it without reckoning that the wearer might be going in another direction; and when I reached the London road found myself

much nearer Coventry than Dunchurch. However, it was good riding, and a gallop for a few miles making up lost time, I arrived at Dunchurch before the Squire. The little, airy, thorough-bred bitch pack was there, the observed of all.

Another mishap attended this day. Sir Theophilus Biddulph's covers, which did, and naturally do, belong to the Warwickshire country, are drawn by Mr Osbaldeston now that he has taken the country ceded by the Atherstone, and there it seems the Baronet had determined we should draw. Consequently all the Leamingtonians were carried half-way home again to see them drawn blank, and then brought back to Dunchurch to take up the original line. In fact it was a tiresome unsatisfactory day; for though we did find somewhere near Frankton Wood, the immense line of cover that runs through that country prevented our seeing much of hounds. The fox was obliging enough to take us as far as Weston on our road home, when he turned short back, and gave Mr Osbaldeston a lift in his way.

A curious circumstance attended my return to Leamington. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon I again entered the town by gaslight. It so happened that when I started in the morning I told the man who brought my hack to the door that I would ride my horse home to the stable after hunting, reckoning that though I did not know where it was, he would; so when I got into the streets I laid the reins upon his neck, expecting he would walk home. Instead of that, without looking either to the right or left, he carried me straight through Leamington, until, finding myself leaving both houses and lights, I turned him round in hopes that the second attempt would prove successful. Again

he went straight up to the Regent; and finding that he was likely to ramble about all night, I at length betook myself to inquiring at all the livery stables if any one could tell me where my horses stood. Being a private stable, I was a long time in finding it, and believe I was riding about the streets for a full hour. The oddest part was that this horse is the most extraordinary one at finding his way about a country I ever saw, and I can only suppose that the gas-lights bewildered him. I remember riding him the season before last from Romsey down to Lyndhurst, in Hampshire, and on returning through the New Forest, which is much intersected with roads, all very much alike, I mistook the way, and wanted to turn him up the Salisbury road instead of that by which we had come; and though he had never before been within many miles of the place, he resolutely refused, and on looking at the finger-post I found he was right.

To return to Leamington. From a mean insignificant village it has within the last twenty years risen to be a place of very considerable importance, not only as regards its size but owing to its saline springs, whose celebrity is fast spreading over the world. That excellent writer, Nimrod, thus describes it in one of his tours:—

> "When I first hunted it," says he, "the county of Warwick was not so universally known as it is at the present moment. Leamington was then only a small village, which we galloped through as we did any other by the roadside without looking at it. It now contains magnificent hotels and houses. It is the resort of all descriptions of persons, who, during their residence there, have little else to do but

explore the beauties of the county, and they are well paid for their trouble. . . . When considered as a hunting country, Warwickshire ranks next to Leicestershire, and a considerable portion of it to the eastward of the Avon is equally good. It not only contains a large space of champaign country which, with a good fox, must show a run; but on the outskirts of it, and which are only made use of for that purpose, there are some of the finest covers in England for cub-hunting, and which are never without foxes. Indeed, a blank day in Warwickshire, when fairly hunted, would not happen twice in three years, which can be said of few other countries."

That the foregoing was an accurate description of Warwickshire in former years I have not the least doubt; but the division of their country with other packs, and the increase of tillage-land, have materially contributed to mar the excellences of the Warwickshire. The circumstances, too, of a large watering-place having sprung up in the very centre of their country will by many be considered as a drawback rather than an acquisition, for the conviviality of any meeting suffers from the unrestrained influx of strangers. Watering-place fox-hunters are seldom good sportsmen. Indeed, fox-hunting and late hours are almost incompatible, and men who indulge in the gallopade at night are seldom fit to gallop hard in the morning. Nevertheless to gentlemen who like a little hunting, a little flirting, and a little dancing, Leamington is not without its recommendations, and there is a good long line of street, in which they may ride or walk and show their unsplashed leathers and smart red coats—a pro-

ceeding by the way much in vogue. Indeed, to talk of Leamington as a hunting quarter appears absurd; for though they boast of four packs of hounds "within reach," they are not what a watering-place man so considers, and the regular fox-hunter, who does not want to go jumping about hot rooms in an evening, can select many places whence he will more easily reach hounds oftener in the course of each week.

In the first place, let us enumerate the four packs of hounds. They are the Warwickshire, the Atherstone, Mr Osbaldeston's, and Mr Drake's. The Warwickshire are stated to have about fifty meets within reach from Leamington, whereof Berricot Wood, Grove Park, Oakley Wood, Offchurch, Stoneleigh, Ufton, Waverley Wood, Wapenbury, and Warwick Park, being within five miles, little sport can be expected, considering the size of the covers and the heterogeneous assemblage that generally composes the field. Alveston Pasture, Ansty Wood, Chesterton Wood, Compton Verney, Fern Hill, Hampton Wood, Haywood, Gaydon Inn, Itchington Heath, Ladbroke, Lighthorne village, Princethorpe, Redlane, Snitherfield, and Walton are all within ten miles; Brick-kiln Gorse, Butler's Marston, Eatington Lodge, Edgehill, Farnborough, Oversley Wood, Oxhill, Packington Park, Radbourn Gorse, Upton, Watergall, Wimpston Bridge are within fifteen miles; and all the rest are between fifteen and twenty-four —quite beyond the distance for sending horses forward in the morning.

The Warwickshire must be held the Leamington pack, for the Atherstone have only four meets within ten miles—viz.: Bourton, Black Dog, Debdale, and Ryton Wood; Mr Osbaldeston, one; and Mr Drake, none. Indeed, the two latter are



Goddard, 2nd Horseman. Mr Russell. Sam Boxall. Day, 1st Whip.
Raven, 1st Whip.

The Warwickshire Hounds.

From 'Annals of the Warwickshire Hunt.' By permission of Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

almost out of the question, there being but few days during the season that they can be got at under twenty miles—a distance, as I before said, too great for moderate sportsmen who wish to combine the gaiety of a watering-place with the sports of the field. People, therefore, act a very unfriendly part by Leamington who puff it as a first-rate hunting quarter; for though their praise may induce men to visit the town once, they cannot make them believe what experience disproves. The consequence is they go away dissatisfied, and give an unfavourable report to others. If Melton Mowbray has never a more formidable competitor than Leamington Priors, it may rest in security; for the latter must beat Brighton before it can enter the lists against any other place.

At Brighton, apart from the sea-breezes, hunting may be enjoyed not only every day but at every hour of the day; and hunting, too, in all its varieties, from the burst over the open down with the high-bred fox-hound or the musical harrier to the plough across the Sussex Weald, or the regular stick-in-the-mud rides in an interminable cover. Hare-hunting is a great acquisition at a watering-place; and here the Leamingtonians are deficient. Many a man would mount his steed to take the air and get an appetite with harriers who would never think of going out with fox-hounds, and we all know that a gentle brush with harriers is the best training for a hunter. How they come to be without so necessary an attraction at Leamington I am at a loss to conceive, unless it is the farmers think that as it is their crops are ridden over sufficiently often to do them good. The Warwickshire yeomen have the reputation of being good sportsmen. It however is not so opulent a county as it was

formerly, and the £2000 a year that used to be raised without the least difficulty for the current expenses of the Hunt was rather difficult to obtain last season; so much so, indeed, that the Warwickshire squires allowed the Leamingtonians to contribute their mites—a privilege which, I understand, had been denied them before.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WARWICKSHIRE.

A MEET OF THE WARWICKSHIRE AT LADBROKE—THE HUNT STAFF —FOLLOWERS OF THE HUNT—A MASTER'S DIFFICULTIES WITH A WATERING-PLACE FIELD—NATURE OF THE COUNTRY— KENILWORTH CASTLE—DUGDALE'S ACCOUNT OF ANCIENT FESTIVITIES—AMENITIES OF LEAMINGTON—INN STABLES— THE SALINE SPRINGS.

THE first time I met the Warwickshire Hounds was at Ladbroke, near Southam. While riding to cover I was surprised to find nearly all the country through which I passed turned up by the plough.[1] In the neighbourhood of Ladbroke the grazing land commences, and there are some very fine enclosures to the south and south-east, bordering on Mr Drake's Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire countries; but from Ladbroke up to Meriden is chiefly woodlands and plough—a part that in former days, according to Nimrod, used to be chiefly reserved for cub-hunting, but since the establishment of the Leamington kennel takes its regular turn with the rest of the country. On arriving at Ladbroke I found an immense assem-

[1] Ladbroke Gorse was described by Sir Hugh Williams as being "in the finest grass country in Europe" when in 1844 it befell him as Secretary to the Warwickshire Hunt to fight the Railway Company who proposed to run a line through or near that covert. The Hunt Club won: *see* Lord Willoughby de Broke's 'The Passing Years,' page 14 and seq. E. D. C.

blage in the field just by the church, the celebrity of the fixture having attracted men from all parts of the country. Among those out was the Squire, and several members of the Pytchley Hunt. These visits of inspection are not always very agreeable, unless the parties have previous notice, which I think had not been the case in this instance, for the men did not turn out in such good form as might have been expected when about to meet the critical eye of such a professor as Mr Osbaldeston. The horses looked poor and tucked up, as though they had encountered some tremendous days, which certainly was not the case; for though the country was unprecedently deep, they could scarcely boast of a single good run up to that period. There having been a slight frost during the night, it was near twelve o'clock before we left the meet—affording us all ample time for inspection.

Among the men I soon recognised Joe Roots, who was first whip to Lord Petre when he hunted part of Essex, and who went to fill the same situation with the Warwickshire when his lordship parted with his hounds. Joe was reckoned a clever fellow in Essex, and would make his way in any country, but he would find it an easier matter to get across a bad country with a good horse than across a good country with a bad one. It must be truly gratifying to all lovers of the chase to see Lord Petre again at the head of a Hunt. I think his late establishment was without exception the neatest and best I ever saw. His men were young, active, well-mounted, and well-appointed; his turn-out in the field magnificent. Sam, the huntsman, once decried as a timid rider, has, since he went to his new situation in the same country, taken the most effectual means of proving

the contrary, and goes over the great yawning ditches with the best of them, and kills his foxes with little or no assistance. How far the allowance of cap-money may have produced this result I leave others to decide.

In point of country, Lord Petre has made a decided change for the better.[1] There are as good wild foxes in parts of Hertfordshire as in countries more remote from the Metropolis, added to which no man ever quitted one in better condition (or more universally respected) than Mr Hanbury.

But to return to the Warwickshire: the servants' horses certainly were not good, and on nags only middling real sport can hardly be expected. Good workmen must have good tools. All huntsmen who fail of showing sport are denounced without mercy, and it is lucky for Boxall that his first season was one of unexampled success. Had he been unfortunate enough to commence his career with the previous one, the chances would have been very much against his recovering ground sufficiently to go on with another. However, from what I saw myself and heard from others, I make no doubt but the last was one of the worst scenting seasons we have encountered for many years. On the day in question we had a beautiful find in Ladbroke Gorse, whence the fox went gallantly away; but a large field pressing on the hounds never let them settle to the scent, and they could scarcely run him a yard.

The fields with the Warwickshire Hounds, especially on that side of the country, comprised more of the Leamington visitors than the neigh-

[1] Lord Petre took the Mastership of the Puckeridge in 1832, succeeding Mr Sampson Hanbury. E. D. C.

bouring gentry. Sir Edward Mostyn had a large stud there during the whole winter, though he did not shine in the field. Lord Ongley was, perhaps, the best mounted and keenest sportsman. A lightweight, his horses were all thorough-bred, and turned out in very excellent condition, which, with the rider's nerve, generally enabled him to give a good account of the day's sport. The three Hon. Mr Ongleys had also very good studs, and when they liked could keep good places, though none of them were so constant in their attendance as his lordship. The name of Ongley is identified with sport, and the late Hon. Sam Ongley will be long remembered. Mr Norbury, formerly a first-rater in Leicestershire, now enjoys the sport in a quiet way in Warwickshire, and maintains his former reputation; but of all hard riders in the latter country last season, Captain Pierson was the very hardest. The way he went on his great, slapping, raw-boned, chestnut horse (appropriately named "Bag of Bones," for he might have hung his hat on each hip) was superb, and I may safely affirm that nothing in Warwickshire could stop them. Last season he got one fall over a flight of rails that would have settled the business of most men, his horse throwing a complete somersault, while the Captain, sticking tight to his saddle, fell undermost. Lord Hopetown was also a pretty regular attendant in the field, and had some fine powerful horses; and Lord Eastnor never missed a day when his Parliamentary duties would allow him. Besides these, there were many casual visitors from other Hunts in the course of the season—Mr Barnard from the Oakley; Mr Benyons and Mr Morris from the Shropshire; Mr Russell, M.P., from Durham; Mr Dawson; Captain Freeman; two Mr Hunters, &c.



CAPTAIN PIERSON'S FALL OVER RAILS.

It seems generally allowed that little occurred in the course of the season to try the mettle of either horses or riders, though when in the Bicester country I did hear a report that a couple of the servants' horses had fallen a sacrifice in a run that took place about the close of January. As is usual at all watering-places, there are a few choice fixtures in the neighbourhood to which the swells repair in their best leathers and scarlets, to exhibit a little before the fair sex, prior to the awful moment of finding the fox. I never saw a day's sport from a show place in my life, though I have seen many a fox mobbed at such. For a Master of Hounds to keep a field of men in decent order is as much as many can manage; but when a street of carriages and flies, with young gentlemen and ladies on ponies, are also to be manœuvred, the task becomes almost hopeless. In the field Mr Russell is particularly quiet and gentlemanly, with a great command of temper, a quality not infrequently called in requisition, for, with the exception of the Brighton fields about Christmas, I think the Warwickshire will vie with most others for unruliness.

Stoneleigh Abbey, the seat of Mr Charles Leigh, is a very favourite resort for the carriage sportsmen, and great regret is expressed every time the hounds meet there that he does not provide any breakfast, an omission which, considering that the visitors number *only* two or three hundred, may perhaps be understood. From what I saw of Warwickshire I should call it anything but a difficult country to cross, and one in which strength is more frequently required than speed. There are a few brooks and bullfinches that would not disgrace Leicestershire, but they are not of frequent occurrence, and the hedges are seldom

made formidable by a double ditch. The ploughed lands, I was told, are at all times deep, and the heavy rains of last winter made the grazing grounds the same, so there was little to choose between the two.

With the far-famed Kenilworth Castle I was very much disappointed. The situation is poor, and the approach from Warwick bad, the visitor coming abruptly upon the castle before he is aware of its propinquity. It is almost wholly in ruins, and the dark mantling ivy that overhangs the walls adds to its general gloom. This place, of course, is a great resort for the Leamingtonians, whither, 'Kenilworth' in hand, they repair, replete with sentiment and romance. The castle is said to have covered seven acres of ground, but Cromwell and his friends best know what it contained. The following extract from Dugdale relates to the festivities held there when Queen Elizabeth paid her visit to the Earl of Leicester :—

"Here in July," says the historian, an. 1575 (17 Eliz.), "having compleated all things for her reception, did he entertain the Queen, for the space of seventeen dayes with excessive cost, and variety of delightful shews, as may be seen at large, in a special discourse thereof then printed and entituled 'the Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth Castle'; having at her first entrance a floating island upon the pool, bright blazing with torches, upon which were clad in silks the Lady of the Lake, and two nymphs waiting on her, who made a speech to the Queen in meeter of the antiquity and owners of that Castle, which was closed with cornets and other loud music. Within the base court was there a very goodly bridge set up of twenty foot wide, and seventy foot long, over which the Queen did pass, on each side whereof were posts erected with presents upon them unto her by the gods, viz., a cage of wild fowl by Silvanus; sundry sorts of rare fruit by Pomona; of corn by Ceres; of wine by Bacchus; of sea fish by Neptune; of all habilments of war by Mars; and

of musical instruments by Phoebus. And for the several dayes of her stay various and rare sports were there exercised, viz., in the Chase a savage man with satyrs, bear baitings, fire-works, Italien tumblers, a country bridal with running at the quintin, and morrice dancing. And that there might be nothing wanting that these parts could afford, hither came the Coventre men, and acted the ancient play, long since used in that city, called *Hocks Tuesday*, setting forth the destruction of the Danes in King Ethelred's time; with which the Queen was so pleased, that she gave them a brace of bucks, and five marks in money to bear the charges of a feast. Besides all this, he had upon the pool a Triton riding on a Mermaid, eighteen foot long, as also Arion on a Dolphin, with rare music."

Turn we from this description or the soul-stirring novel of the immortal Scott and look upon the deserted walls—the all that now remains to tell the tale of what once contained the great and powerful of the land,—contemplate the ivy-clad battlements, whose monotony reverberates only to the screech of the owl or the fluttering of the bat, and think how once upon those towers the proud ensign floated on the evening breeze, those roofless walls looked down upon "arms and armour bright," and then reflect on the—

> "Vain end of human strength, of human skill,
> Conquest, and triumph, and domain, and pomp,
> And ease and luxury."

But who can look on these scenes of desolation without an inward prayer that the ages to come may not lament similar destruction committed in our time?

Warwick Castle is a fine old building, though it does not occupy the commanding situation for which pictures prepared me, and to my mind is the first essential for a castle. Seen from the bridge it is imposing, and the churches in the background

produce a good effect. Warwick being distant only two miles from Leamington, of course it is a very favourite jaunt, and the road generally swarms with equestrians, pedestrians, and beggars.

Of the town of Leamington a few words may not be misplaced. Being entirely new, it possesses all the advantages derivable from modern architecture. There is one continuous street formed by the old and new town, connected by a bridge over the Leam, and this forms the town promenade. In different parts are the libraries, baths, billiard and assembly rooms—in short, every requisite for killing time; while a canal in one part and the river in another afford facilities for drowning. The well-known Mr Ebers of Bond Street (once lessee of the Italian Opera) has a very handsome bazaar, library, and reading-room in the old town, and Mr Lubbock has another in the new, both of which are much frequented, and in them many a fox is killed over again by the assembled sportsmen. In the summer, which is the great season, there are public tables at both the large inns, the landlords whereof contract with their guests at so much per week, nourishing them five times a day, and finding a bedroom, also the run of the public rooms, at three guineas a week. Of course, there was nothing of that sort when I was there; but having a natural antipathy to my own society, especially in an hotel with all the horrors of a "private sitting and wax candles" inflaming the weekly bill, I gladly availed myself of a snug coffee-room, and the society of a few fox-hunters, and such invalids and summer visitors as had outlived the season and the public table.

In point of expense the hotels are pretty much on a par with those of other watering-places, rather over than under those at hunting quarters.



Kenilworth Castle.

There are all sorts and sizes, varying in comfort as much as appearance. Copp's and the Regent are the principal ones, but the Bedford is as quiet, and the Crown, I believe, as comfortable as any. Some of the landlords, however, are sad screws, especially in the stable department, and it is only in the hope that they will perceive the folly of such conduct towards men who are free to go or come that I forbear making public some of their impositions. If men, when they put up their horses at inns where they intend to stay, were to make a previous bargain, it would save a great deal of annoyance when settling day arrived; for though no sportsman begrudges his horses as much corn as they can eat, he does not like to be paying an extravagant price for half feeds, and the groom who has been accustomed to dive into the bin as he liked at home does not fancy having his corn doled out by the ostler in small measure as if each grain contained a pearl. Inn stables are my aversion, and I am never comfortable as long as my horses are in them. They are liable to be disturbed at all hours of the night, and ostlers and helpers are continually coming in under pretence of looking for dandy brushes or some such thing, and leaving the door open behind them.

At Leamington there is abundance of private stables in all quarters, varying in price from two shillings to half a crown a stall per week; and in the high town a set of mews were completed last season eclipsing in appearance and comfort any I have yet seen in a provincial town. Here, as at the private stables, the horse owner can buy his hay and corn, and lodgings are to be had at all prices, to some few of which stables are attached.

Having now mentioned everything save the most important feature—the Saline Springs—I must leave them for some one else to describe. They are said to cure every disease, from hydrophobia to visceral obstructions; and Dr Middleton recommends them "to the sedentary and the studious, to the man of pleasure and the man of business, to all who have suffered the current of life to stagnate for want of active exercise, or have driven it on too rapidly by indulgence and excess." Fuller, in his 'Worthies of Great Britain,' remarks that "at Leamington . . . there issue out within a stride of the womb of the earth two springs, as different in taste and operation as Jacob and Esau in disposition—the one salt and the other fresh. This the meanest countryman does plainly see by their effects, whilst it would puzzle a consultation of physicians to assign the cause thereof." Dugdale, in his 'Antiquities of Warwickshire,' observes that "the inhabitants make use of the water for seasoning their meat," a statement since contradicted. Their efficacy is, however, undisputed, and Leamington bids fair to become the most flourishing place of the sort in the kingdom. Of the number of invalids who resort to it, some idea may be formed from the circumstance of its maintaining eight physicians, five surgeons, an oculist and aurist, a dentist, and a corn-cutter. I do not know what it is in the summer, but it will be found a very agreeable winter residence for those whose tastes or family arrangements render a watering-place desirable. There are plenty of rides and promenades in the morning; balls, both public and private, in the evening; a theatre without a company; oyster clubs for men; and tea at discretion for

the ladies. Added to which a man with a light open carriage or a couple of horses may see a good deal of the hounds.

But unless some great change comes over the land I am free to predict that Leamington will never be a very favourite resort for sportsmen.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PUCKERIDGE AND THE BICESTER.

SPITEFUL WEATHER—HERTFORD NOT A HUNTING CENTRE—A DAY WITH THE PUCKERIDGE AT ASTON BURY—STRANGERS IN THE FIELD—AN ANCIENT HUNT—WITH MR DRAKE'S AT CHIPPING WARDEN—MR DRAKE'S NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTRY—HUNTING MEN FROM OXFORD—THEIR HORSES AND MEN—BICESTER ON A HUNTING MORNING.

THE months slip by so rapidly that I declare we are at the commencement of another season before I have concluded my account of last year's Tour. I saw the fixture of a Yorkshire pack, the Sinnington, advertised in the 'York Herald' of 29th September. It is difficult to know what sort of season we are to expect—the last was the most open I ever remember. The only snow I saw in course of it was on the top of "an exceeding high hill"—viz., Cank, or Cannock, Heath in Staffordshire, one day in the middle of March when out with Mr Meynell's hounds. Christmas Day was more like a midsummer day; dining at Leamington we sat with the window open. To be sure, the room was small and the fumes of beef and pudding were potent; but Christmas dinner with the window open!

The weather seems always to spite me. On New Year's Eve I took the Birmingham mail and rattled off, bound for Bicester in Oxfordshire.

A sharp frost began as soon as I got into the coach, and before I arrived the wheels were making that ominous noise that causes the heart to sink.

"New Year's Day was Sunday!" (as the old Warwick coachman discovered when Jorrocks went out shooting in Surrey [1]), and the weather did not give much promise of allowing us to hunt on the following day. I strolled along the Buckingham road in the afternoon, hands in pockets, poking my toe into all the frozen cart-ruts by way of trying the strength of the ice, and did not like the looks of the thing at all. The Duke of Beaufort's hounds were in Gloucestershire, and Mr Drake's fixtures for the week were Islip, Coversfield, and Trafford Bridge—three days, one too few, when the Duke's hounds are not come-at-able. It was desperately cold that night, and I had the warming-pan.

My groom called me at eight o'clock to know about going on with a horse, but I did not fancy skating, so kept to my couch. When I got up the weather looked so determined that, taking all things into consideration—the openness of the previous months, the likelihood of a storm, and the misery of living in an inn in a country town, —I determined to be off, horses and all; and got outside Cooper's Leamington coach that I might have the pleasure of witnessing the effects of the frost, and congratulating myself on my sagacity in foretelling a storm.

I was out in my calculations, however, for

[1] In the *New Sporting Magazine* of February 1832, Surtees made "The Yorkshireman" and Mr Jorrocks go out shooting on New Year's Day: the editor of the old magazine was quick to notice the mistake, corrected when the paper was reprinted in the *Jaunts and Jollities*. E. D. C.

the frost gave on the 5th, and Mr Drake's hounds were out even on this very day. Still it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, says the old proverb, and, thanks to this short frost, I had an opportunity of seeing what I shall never do again—viz., Mr Hanbury's [the Puckeridge] hounds in Hertfordshire. Never having hunted in this country before, at least on his side of it, I made a grievous mistake, sending my horses to Hertford instead of Ware, Wade's Mill, Puckeridge, or any place where they are accustomed to receive hunters. It would not be fair to mention the name of the inn, because they did not profess to know anything about the matter; but I never saw such apologies for stables in my life, and in addition to their miserable structure there were two or three barrow-loads of manure in each stall. The hostel, too, kept pace with the offices, and the uniform badness of everything was the only praiseworthy part about it. Another unfortunate wight was there; and the waiter, doubtless thinking that sportsmen are a species of travelling bagmen to Diana, was very obligingly about to usher me into his room as soon as he found that I was the "gemman wot owned the osses." Thinking that this arrangement might not be agreeable to either, I succeeded in obtaining what they called the "back parlour," and having discussed a wretched supper, I retired to a tolerable bed.

Mr Hanbury's hounds met on the following day at a place called Aston Bury, about eight miles from Hertford, on the great North Road, a little under thirty miles from London. It was Saturday, and there was an immense field. It was a clear sunshiny morning, with the wind due north, and a sharpish frost in the night had taken all the "splash boot" out of the yellow road. I over-

took the hounds, with George Barwick and two whips mounted on strong, useful-looking horses, attended by two grooms, in light grey liveries, riding the huntsman's second horse and Mr Hanbury's hunter, altogether a very sporting, well-appointed turn-out. It might be the extreme brightness of the day, but the hounds certainly appeared in finer condition than any I had seen in the flying countries, as they call them. The Squire himself, as he appeared on this day, would make an admirable subject for the pen of an Addison or Washington Irving. His low-crowned hat, square-cut coat, flapped waistcoat, breeches and big boots, his good-natured smile and word for everybody, added to his slow and cautious style of riding, and the steady rat-tailed brown horse that walked in and walked out of his fences, presented the very beau-ideal of an old English country gentleman.

True, a few eyesores rather destroyed the impression of rusticity; but such must ever be the case in the neighbourhood of London. Some sad vulgar-looking fellows came to cover in a sort of dog-cart, to ride hired hacks, while more than one Bond Street lounger, dressed in the height of fashion, with massive gold-knotted jockey-whips, were to be seen rasping at every fence and rail. As I said before, the morning was frosty, and a good deal of time was lost at the meet. At length the hounds were thrown into a cover close by, on the right-hand side of the road going northwards, where they immediately found, and appeared to be running right away to the east end, for which we all made; but he headed short back, and, breaking cover just where we had met, crossed the North Road, and left two-thirds of the field—myself among the number—

gaping at the far end. There was no time to be lost, so we set off and rode the line as well as we could, arriving just in time to see the fox lost in the Berkeley country. We found again, and after much cold hunting and ringing gave him up towards nightfall in the park of Mr Smith, the banker. A hard frost succeeded, and I again struck my tent, resolving if ever I went into that country again not to be caught in the town of Hertford.

This country has been hunted without intermission for upwards of a century, consequently it is of high standing in the aristocracy of the chase. Indeed, with the exception of Lord Yarborough's, the Raby, and Mr Foljambe's (late Lord Scarborough's) pack, I should think they are about the oldest going. I was rather surprised, considering the celebrity Mr Hanbury has acquired as a Master of Hounds, to find that he had not been at the head of this establishment very many years, having only succeeded Mr Calvert in 1826. However, he made the best use of his time, for I have often heard him spoken of as the best judge of hounds, and one who knew more about pedigrees than any other Master.

I returned to Bicester about the beginning of February, and took up my quarters at Deakin's again, with every appearance of open weather. The Duke of Beaufort's hounds were still in Gloucestershire, and there being none within reach on the day after my arrival, I rode down to the seat of learning, Oxford, to learn what Mr Moreton's and the other packs were about. They could tell me everything except what I sought to know, and I returned as wise as I went.

On 11th February I met Mr Drake's hounds at Chipping Warden, in Northamptonshire, whither

they had gone the preceding day. It is a small village, without much accommodation for strangers' horses, and none for the strangers themselves; consequently the latter must either start from home in the morning or sleep at Banbury or some neighbouring town the previous evening. There is nothing like one's own bed in my opinion; so I started before daylight, and arrived in very good time. I think my horse stood at the Rose and Crown in Chipping Warden, but there are eight or ten stalls at the Hare and Hounds at Wardington, a mile or two on the Banbury side. Our field on this day was by no means numerous. In the first place, it is a long way for the Bicester men to come; secondly, there were very few to come; and thirdly, the Warwickshire Hounds met at Shuckborough Park, at about an equal distance.

We threw off at Boddington Hill, about three miles from Chipping Warden—a fine gorse cover on a hill-side overlooking a splendid tract of grass country with large enclosures, stiff fencing, and nothing but a canal to avoid. I know few finer tracts of country, either for a run or a bird's-eye view, as Mr Jorrocks has it; and on this day we had a merry thing with but one drawback. We found almost immediately, and as quickly the fox went away, with his head set right for the finest line of country he could select. Before, however, the hounds had got settled to the scent, there was "Talli-ho, talli-ho!—whoop, whoop, halloa, hark back!" in half a score places, on the hill and neighbourhood, puzzling both hounds and horsemen. The fact was that a travelling fox was just then making his way to Boddington Hill (doubtless from his friends the Warwickshire at Shuckborough Park), and, passing within a field

of the other, was mistaken for the hunted fox. Ben Foote, however, would have nothing to say to him; and, getting his hounds forward as fast as possible, took up the scent of the fresh fox at the corner of a large grass enclosure. As Nimrod said, *Vires acquirit eundo*, a terrible burst was the result. This part of Northamptonshire is tremendously strong and difficult to get over. Though the line was all grass, the country rode heavy. The scent was capital—quicker things have been seen, doubtless—and it was a breather, *the* fastest thing I saw last season. To describe a run, however, is no easy matter: the variations consist in the gates, brooks, rails, raspers, and yawners taken in the course of it, and the falls. Suffice it then to say that we ran our fox to ground at Farnborough, in the Warwickshire country; and the Warwickshire Hounds having drawn their first covers blank, arrived there shortly after, just as Reynard thought the coast was clear and he might be jogging; and after showing them run the second, his life fell a sacrifice to his temerity. We afterwards found again at Redhill, and having killed a ringer after some hour and a half's work, hounds returned to their home kennel.

The propinquity of Oxford to Bicester lends a meet anywhere within reach a character of its own. The distance between the two is, I think, about twelve miles, and the road is tolerably good. Let us suppose hounds are to meet at Fringford Bridge, three miles out on the Buckingham road. Between four and five o'clock on the previous afternoon whole strings of varmint-looking hacks may be seen entering the town in custody of that peculiar breed of men who do the "sly jobs" at the University towns. The dress of these fellows generally consists of some



Hy. Alken.

Full Cry.

old flash coat, the gift of some collegian, and coarse stable clothing: a superfine green jacket, perhaps, with a calf-skin waistcoat, military-looking pantaloons, boots and breeches that seem to be at enmity, judging by the distance they keep apart at the knees. There is something peculiarly knavish in the appearance of these men—regular "gallows-looking" dogs, in fact, who seem capable of any iniquity; and to enhance their attractions they generally want an eye, nose, or hand, or are otherwise disfigured. The horses, too, are peculiar. They are generally blemished; but as they get plenty of corn and lots of work, their condition is far from bad, and but for the bad saddles, bridles, and hair-girths, &c., that always bespeak the hack-hunter, many of them might pass muster very well at a cover side.

In the morning, then, there is such a tearing and galloping through the streets of Bicester—such barking of dogs, such hallooing of women and children, and such inquiries after horses! A party will breakfast at Deakin's, perhaps—champagne, deviled kidneys, and coffee—and their hacks will have a feed of corn in the meantime; then, in the middle of the meal, the tramp of horses leaving the yard is heard, and for fear of being late down they go, out come the hacks—and then such confusion!

"Why, this is not my horse," says one.

"No, sir," says Joe, "it be Mr ——'s; but it be the one you *cum'd* on."

"Nonsense; this has a rat-tail. Mine had not a rat-tail."

"Don't know wot he ad when you cum'd away; he came in here with a rat-tail, that's all I knows. Maybe you rode it off coming."

"Why, I thought I was to have the one-eyed horse," says another whose hunter is just going on.

"So you are, sir," says Dick; "this be him."

"Why, no; he has two eyes about him; how can that be him?"

"Oh, but he can only *see* with von, and that's vy we calls him the von-eyed horse. He'll carry you grandly—he's well figged, I assure you."

Another clattering of hoofs, another volley of shouts, and another party go tearing away, for Oxford men know but one pace, which is as hard as ever they can go. The trade of hack-letting is not so good as it was formerly at Oxford, and I was told there were more men keeping their own horses last year than ever before; and yet there were not so many sportsmen as usual in the University. Indeed, I think the passion for field sports has rather declined at both Oxford and Cambridge, which speaks badly for the rising generation. I sent a couple of horses to Cambridge about this time last year—the second October meeting,—thinking to combine a little hunting and racing, but did not see many amateurs of either sport. I used to meet a string of Jordan's horses at exercise every morning as I went to Newmarket, which did not say much for the work they had to do. Indeed, the very idea of exercising a Cambridge hack seems absurd.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DUKE OF GRAFTON'S.

THE DUKE'S HOUNDS—WOOTTON BASSETT—THE SPORTING MILLER—GLENARTNEY—BICESTER—GOOD INNS—MR MORRELL'S HARRIERS—MR PEYTON—MAJOR WYNDHAM.

THE Duke of Grafton's celebrated pack are frequently within reach of Bicester, though at longish distances. The first time I met them was at Drayton cross-road, in Buckinghamshire, having sent a horse on the previous day to the neat town of Winslow, about ten miles north of Aylesbury. I make it a rule never to keep hacks in winter, for at inns and livery stables they cost as much as hunters, without being able to do hunter's work. Consequently when the distance is too great to ride a hunter to cover, I sometimes have to hire what proves a queerish animal. In villages I apply first to the butcher, for butcher's nags can always go; but at Bicester there was a blacksmith and publican, with a celebrated run-away mare I used to patronise. She was only four years old, I believe, but a most determined goer, and when a man is in a hurry, it is much easier to let the horse run away with him than for him to run away with the horse. The cross-road from Bicester to Winslow, however, is the most circuitous I ever travelled, chiefly through by-lanes and across fields, with no end

of gates to open, not by any means suited to a runaway. Luckily for me, I was first on the road that morning; consequently there was nothing to fret her, and I arrived safe at my destination, though she nearly did for me on a subsequent day crossing Tussmore Park on my way to Wesley Wood to meet His Grace again.

The Duke of Grafton's present a very curious appearance; the uniform of the Hunt being dark green, a short-sighted man might suppose himself among a party of beaglers; and to increase the unsightliness there are seldom three green coats of the same shade. There certainly is no colour like scarlet for hunting, and none that wears so well. Of course it is only members of the Hunt who sport the coat; strangers are allowed to enliven the scene with their scarlets. The Duke's huntsman, Rose, is a very celebrated character in his line, and a civil painstaking fellow into the bargain. There are generally some of the Lord Fitzroys out. They take an active part in the field, and I believe Lord Southampton has hunted a good deal with them since he resigned the Quorn. I was unfortunate in my first day with the Duke of Grafton's hounds, inasmuch as we had a long trailing blank day. After hanging about a long time to give the owners of some waiting horses a chance, we went away in the direction of Leighton Buzzard, and after a weary round by Lady Lubbock's, at half-past three found ourselves in Whaddon Chase, at which place, there being no chance of getting a fox away, I left, having to ride my hunter home.

I have often been surprised by the memories of horses, though I had cause to complain of one that showed me the curiosities of Leamington instead of seeking his stable. On this day I was

riding an old horse bought at Tattersall's, which I believe had been hunted in Surrey all his life, and had certainly never been in Buckinghamshire before. Though he had travelled to Winslow for the first time the day before, and I had travelled the road that morning, he remembered it better than I did. It was dark, but he refused to answer the bit when I wanted to pull him the wrong way, and, on giving him his head, I found on inquiry that he was right.

Tussmore Park, which I mentioned before, is one of the show places in Mr Drake's home country. It is about three miles from the town of Bicester, and close to the famous Cottesford Heath. There are plenty of foxes, but they are seldom guilty of showing a run. The house, a good one built of stone, has little of the picturesque. A good many pheasants were to be seen about the place. Talking of pheasants, I never saw so many in all my life as I did one day in some small covers close to Wootton, the seat of Lord Chandos. Mr Drake's hounds had met at the village of Chilton, several miles distant therefrom, and drawing round towards home they took Wootton in the way. Now all the world knows that the Duke of Buckingham is not very friendly to foxes, neither used Lord Chandos to have any great partiality for them. However, those days are gone by (at least I hope so), and better times are in store now that so popular a man as Mr Drake has the country. Well, we got into the covers, and the pheasants rose about our ears like swarms of flies. The place was alive with them. Two or three got up at every step. The covers being very small, the hounds were soon through them, and we were riding up the park towards the house when Ben said something

about traps that sent a reverend divine, a keen lover of the sport, almost into a fit.

"Traps!" cried he, throwing his hands in the air. "My God, you don't say so! Here's an end to fox-hunting!"

"No, sir," said an underkeeper in a plush jacket, "it was only a rabbit-trap."

Ben, however, dissented from this story, whereupon they were confronted; but Ben stuck to what he said first, and at length it was decided that some of the field should go back and examine and report what they really were. Accordingly a party of us set off with Ben, who soon exposed a couple of traps capable of holding a donkey apiece. A funeral oration followed from the divine, who refused consolation, and declared it was who-whoop to the sport. While this was going forward without, the servants in the house, who saw our approach, had spread several tables with bread and cheese and ale in front of the house, and as we had to pass close to the door all those that liked helped themselves; but when the parson came he turned away with disgust, as he would from a cup of poison, and afterwards rated severely those he saw indulging in the unhallowed meal. All's well, however, that ends well. A leash of foxes were found at the other side of the house almost immediately after, and we agreed that the traps had been left there unintentionally. I hope this season will prove our conjecture right.

I remember seeing some famous fun in Tussmore Park one show morning when the hounds met there. The hero of the occasion was a man named Hartley, a sporting miller well known with the Duke of Beaufort's and Mr Drake's. In addition to his grinding industry, he is a bit of a horse-dealer,



THE SPORTING MILLER WINNING HALF-A-CROWN.

and has always "the best horse in England" under him. If his head were shaved and you were to take a side view of him you would not know which was the front and which the back, so little marked are the features. His nose is not above the size of a button. In fact, his head is more like a barber's block than anything else. He is quite a character in the Bicester country; and last season Lord Norreys, Lord Alresford, and some others rigged him out in a huntsman's cap and scarlet coat, to which he added a pair of white cords and boots with the tops *painted* white. Having no beauty to spoil, a set of good nerves, and a horse to ride for sale, he used to rasp away at a famous pace across a country whenever he got anything like a start; but if left behind he shut up immediately, for it was of no use going when there was no one to see him. However, that morning in Tussmore Park a party of men got about him, and, by the lure of a half-crown bet each time, persuaded him to charge some considerable flights of rails on a half-broke grey brute with switch tail and a head like a fiddle-case; and really he showed great skill in handling his horse. None of the three hundred guinea men would accept his invitation to follow him. It was most laughable to see this queer-looking tiger ramming his horse at the rails, the animal going up into the air as if he would never come down again, the miller's coat-tails flying out at the sides like wings, and to hear his self-satisfied chuckle as he landed on the other side and won his half-crown. I think it was the same day that I saw Sir Frederick Johnson riding the once celebrated Glenartney that made such a noise for the Derby in 1827. The history of this horse,

as far as it goes, is a fine example of the lottery of horse-flesh. Lord Jersey refused 5000 guineas for him before that race, and ultimately sold him to Sir Frederick for either 250 or 350 guineas. He is a queer-tempered brute, but beautiful to look at.

As a hunting quarter Bicester ranks next to Leicester in my opinion; and if Mr Drake's hounds only hunted another day each week, when the Duke of Beaufort is at Badminton, it would be a considerable acquisition to the place. As to country, independently of the Northamptonshire part, there is a fine, wild, sporting-looking tract in the vale of Aylesbury that presents a cheering prospect to the eye of a sportsman; and though intersected by brooks is by no means so difficult to cross as the Northamptonshire part. The appearance of Bicester is ugly and sporting. I do not think there are ten yards of flagging in the long straggling streets. The principal inns are Deakin's (the King's Arms) and the Crown. Of the former I can speak from experience. The stabling, which has been lately rebuilt at a considerable expense, is excellent; and there is as good port wine in the cellar as you may find at any hotel in England. Given some mutton-broth, a good beef-steak, and an easy-chair, what more does a sportsman require?

Upon the subject of wine I have often intended saying a few words to innkeepers, and perhaps I cannot avail myself of a better opportunity than the present. It is extraordinary what wretched stuff many of them put before their guests under the name of port, sometimes so bad that it is not even drinkable when made into negus; and were it not for the consideration most of them

evince for the drinkers by retaining one-third out of each bottle to make a pint for somebody else, the chances are that the coroner's fees would be considerably augmented. It appears to me very bad policy, especially when fox-hunters are concerned, for the strong exercise they take generally makes them good for a bottle, as a friend of mine says. The George at Melton, the Bell at Leicester, Deakin's at Bicester, the Sun at Lyndhurst, the Albion at Brighton, the Fountain at Canterbury, Johnston's at Crawley, and the White Horse at Romsey are the only inns at which I remember ever getting really good wine, and I have been in scores. As to the inns at Leamington, the outcry against the wines was general.

Beside the Duke of Beaufort's, Duke of Grafton's, and Mr Drake's fox-hounds, there is a pack of excellent harriers kept and hunted by Mr Morrell in the neighbourhood of Oxford, with which a very good day's sport may be had when the others are not within reach. I saw a very good hour and a quarter with them one day in the neighbourhood of Blenheim, when they killed their hare at the outskirts of the park. They are hunted by Mr Morrell, jun., assisted by one whipper-in. There is plenty of greyhound coursing also. In addition to all these advantages, Bicester has another which most other places are without: if a man lames or overworks his horses he can be supplied on the instant with another from Deakin's stud, and on very reasonable terms; whereas in other places he might have to shut up shop for a time. Sir Frederick Johnson used to ride a very nice chestnut mare of Deakin's last season, and I think Lord Villiers had some at

Melton, and several other gentlemen had them by the season.

Among the followers of hounds Mr Peyton certainly surpasses all men for determination across a country. I remember a sharp burst we had with the Duke of Grafton's. I was riding along a headland with the hounds in the next field and a high ill-conditioned-looking hedge between us, when I heard to my left a crackling just like the outburst of a fire; and looking round I saw Mr Peyton on a white-legged chestnut forcing the way through, by sheer dint of impetus, for it was so high no horse could clear it. There was another very good rider, though of a different sort, and excellent sportsman in the Duke of Grafton's country part of last season in the person of Major Wyndham of the Scots Greys. The late King said that Major Wyndham was the finest man in the British Army, and I never saw a finer either in it or out. This, however, is against him in the hunting field, for the weight that goes with his height tells sadly on a horse. Still, to see him go over a country, whether it be with a burning scent over the grass of Leicestershire, through the clays of Sussex, or over the yawning ditches of Essex, he is always in his place, never distressing his horse, never riding for a spurt, or jumping for jumping's sake, but going steadily just doing what is necessary and no more, and I will be bound for it that Major Wyndham sees more of hounds and knows more of the ins and outs of each run than two-thirds of the ten-stone men that are out. Moreover, he is not one of your fine talking men, who, because he has hunted in Leicestershire, d——ns all provincials, and turns up his nose when he comes to the plough.

He hunts in every country he is quartered in, and never, I am certain, left one to which the people would not be right glad to see him return, and that is more than can be said for many military men. In fact, he is a fine specimen of a soldier, a sportsman, and a polished gentleman.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE NORTHUMBERLAND AND MR RALPH LAMBTON'S.

(1832.)

LAST DAY OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND SEASON—SIR MATTHEW RIDLEY, M.F.H., AND HIS STAFF—CHANGES IN MR RALPH LAMBTON'S COUNTRY—PORTRAIT OF MR LAMBTON BY FERNELEY—FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMBTON HOUNDS—A RUN IN THE SEDGEFIELD COUNTRY—WINTER, THE HUNTSMAN—MR LAMBTON IN THE FIELD—HARRIERS AT WALLSEND—FOXES IN THE LAMBTON COUNTRY BADLY DISTRIBUTED—THE LANCHESTER COUNTRY—VULPECIDES—SOME LAMBTON HOUNDS—OTHER MATTERS.

"Our hounds," as my friend G—— would say, have concluded a season of unexampled openness, without a proportionate share of sport. An early harvest allowed both packs to commence operations sooner than usual; for even in districts where the crops sometimes postpone ripening until the next year, the corn was pretty well got in by the end of September. The country hunted by the Northumberland Hounds does not admit of their continuing the sport so long as that hunted by Mr Ralph Lambton, and accordingly they "lapt it up," as they say in these parts, on the 2nd of April, after a very good run of fifty minutes against the teeth of an outrageous wind, having killed within a brace of the same number of foxes they did last year. Sir Matthew Ridley,

the Master, was little with them during the season, being detained in Town by those Parliamentary duties which interfere so seriously with rural pursuits; but his place was ably supplied by Mr Ridley, his eldest son, who trains on for the noble sport with a spirit and enthusiasm quite delightful to witness. Isaac, the huntsman who succeeded Loyd Evans (or Evans Loyd), I am sorry to say, met with a serious accident a few days before the close of the season. His horse fell when going at a goodish pace, and rolled over him. At first it was feared that the results were serious, a previous fall having shaken him a good deal; but he is in a fair way to recovery, and is expected to resume his post next season.

Sir Matthew arrived from London just at that time, and hunted the hounds himself the last day. The two whips are newly entered to the chase, one never having seen a hound before last season, the other not having had that felicity before the present one. Nevertheless, despite this and other disadvantages, they have managed pretty well on the whole, and things promise well for next season. Besides the kennel at Blagdon, they have established "a trumpery one," as Joe Hatch called it, at Stamfordham, in the neighbourhood of which lies their best country; and there is talk of their getting an experienced man for first whip, which should they do, I would suggest the expediency of not allowing him a horn. As things are there is far too much "tootle tootle," as well as too many cooks, otherwise too many huntsmen in the field, thus rendering the hounds heedless both of horn and halloa.

Neither the Lambton Hounds nor their Master were ever in greater force than this season. Like most other packs, their sport has not equalled

that of more natural seasons. Still there has been lots of hunting, making up in quantity for what it wanted in quality, and six-and-forty brace of foxes may already be reckoned on the kennel door. Part of the home country has been so cut up with "Black Diamond holes" within the last few years that any prospect of sport is nearly out of the question; but the Sedgefield country will still bear comparison with any provincial, though the march of railroads is doing its best to spoil it. Foxes, though not scarce, were badly dispersed; and from the shortness of many of the runs there would appear to be a want of seasoned ones in the country. The two preceding seasons were remarkable for the length and severity of the runs, which may, perhaps, account for the present falling off. That out-and-out sportsman, Billy Williamson, as he is familiarly called, started a subscription for a painting of the worthy Master of the Hounds, and the talents of Ferneley of Melton Mowbray produced an admirable likeness of Mr Ralph Lambton on his chestnut horse, Cerberus, with several couple of hounds—Mountebank, Watchman, &c.—about him, and that varmint fellow, Bob Fenwick, the first whip, in the foreground. Though he was not the man wanted, the likeness of Bob is inimitable, and forms one of the best features of the picture. Some people would have preferred a portrait of the master alone, there being already extant a large painting [1] of him on his famous horse Undertaker, including hounds, horses, and men: a successful work in every respect save the most important one—the visage. This is like neither what Mr Lambton's now is or ever was, being far too round and chubby.

[1] By James Ward, R.A.: reproduced in *Thoughts on Hunting and Other Matters:* by R. S. Surtees and Mr Jorrocks.



J. E. Ferneley.

Lambton Hounds at Feeding Time.

But it only wants a fillip to set a subscription afloat for a half-length portrait of one of the finest sportsmen, most polished gentlemen, and best men this country ever saw, or ever will behold.

The new picture, by the way, is to grace the walls of Somerset House at the next exhibition.

Our sportsmen continue much the same as heretofore. In the Northumberland country, perhaps, Mr Collingwood of Dissington understands the thing as well as any one, though there is not a truer or keener sportsman than Mr H—rv—y of Newcastle, who also hunts with Mr Lambton, and whose quiet unassuming manners have procured him many friends among the *élite* of both Hunts. Indeed, the Newcastle men stand pre-eminent in that respect; and no Hunt in England can produce better sportsmen or quieter men in the field than Mr Shield, the Marleys, Mr Taylor, Mr Thomas, Mr Codling, or Mr Hackworth. My friend Parsons (the hairdresser) had his mare lamed last year; consequently he has not taken the field at all this season, which is the more to be regretted, as no man ever turned out a horse with a finer mane or tail.

We have lost one of our best riders in the Lambton Hunt in the person of Mr John S[haf]toe, who is going to show the "green collars" the way in Hunts, and joining Messrs Crofts, Nash, and the other hard-riding black coats that inhabit those parts. Still we have some left, though the entry of young sportsmen is not very promising, and it will take good men to beat Messrs G(re)g(so)n, Robert S(haf)toe, Harl(an)d, or Mr H(e)nd(er)son, the last a very forward man in the field in every sense of the word, though his style of riding is adapted neither to the country nor his stable. Besides these, we have some very great sportsmen

at Newcastle. There is one we call "The Count," who talks very big about hunting, as though he went out every day, and when he does go, turns out in great form, yet he would as lief see the devil found as a fox. And there is another, who, when he rides to see the hounds throw off, puts his horse into the nearest stable for fear of being thrown off himself. To do him justice, he makes no pretension to be a fox-hunter, which the other does.

The *Chol*lera, as Matty W(ilkin)son calls it,[1] made us very dull here for some time, and the place had every appearance of being deserted. Things are looking up again now; we had a Fast and a Fancy Ball on consecutive days. There was also a fancy ball at Durham on the 8th, and a Union Hunt dinner at Chester-le-Street on the same day, both of which were well attended. A man can do without a ball, but he must have a dinner every day; consequently I stuck to the latter, and a very pleasant party we had at the "Lambton Arms." Of course, Mr Ralph Lambton was in the chair. Sir Matthew Ridley was on his right, and Mr Ridley on his left; and after divers loyal and patriotic toasts—such as "Our Master, Mr Ralph Lambton," "*And* the Coal Trade," &c.—the company separated in great good-humour with themselves and everybody else. On the following day we dirtied our boots at Hare Hill, where we soon found a gallant fox, who gave us scurry into the Sedgefield country, finally beating us at Cleveland Gorse, much to the chagrin of that keen sportsman, Commodore

[1] Matty had a touch of it, which he cured by a plentiful dose of "auld peg," toasted, and he means to apply to Government for a patent for the discovery.

Trotter,[1] who was not able to qualify for his pint of wine in consequence.

Jack Winter continues to carry the horn with Mr Lambton's. Having seen all the crack huntsmen, whether gentle or simple, of the present day, I may perhaps hazard an opinion: though Jack neither dashes from cover to cover with the alacrity of "the Rose" of the Duke of Grafton's establishment, or makes the patent casts of George Osbaldeston, or lifts his hounds like Tom Smith of the Craven, I maintain that he is a good steady huntsman, and well adapted to his countries, which are as different as chalk and cheese, one being a fine open tract, with large grass enclosures and easy fencing; the other, the most cramped, crooked, woody district a fine pack of hounds were ever thrown into. Bob Fenwick and Tom, the second whip, are two of the finest horsemen I ever saw; even the far-famed Jack Stevens would find the former an awkward customer. He is as hard as nails, with soul and body centred in the sport. Tom is a lightweight, and an active though apparently delicate man; but, taking the establishment as a whole, they are much above the ordinary run of servants. Bob's father continues kennel-huntsman, and Forster looks after the earth-stopping.

Mr Lambton still lends his powerful aid in the field; and though the hand of time has somewhat slackened his pace, he can still make his way across the country, and his voice has lost none of that rich mellow chorusness that has ever distinguished it. Indeed I should say that in point

[1] The commodore is a well-known and much respected character in the Lambton Hunt, residing at Castle Eden; his practice is to allow himself a pint of wine every day he sees the hounds kill a fox, which he designates a "qualified day."

of bodily health he never was better than at the present time, and the sight of this veteran sportsman, in his sixty-fourth year, dashing his hounds into cover with all the energy of youth, and the sound of his cheering, soul-stirring "yooi over there, yooi over!" makes the blood gallop in one's veins. He has not been so well mounted this year as his friends could wish, though he has spared neither pains or expense. In truth, we are lamentably off for young stock in both counties; there is scarcely a good brood mare in either, and a good stallion in neither. If some public-spirited man does not take compassion upon us, I don't know what we shall do for hunters, as there will scarcely be a horse that may not be purchased at old Combs, the Shields gig-driver's price, who says "a man is a fool who gives more than fifty shillings for a horse."

Talking of Shields reminds me that we have got a pack of harriers at Wallsend (half-way between that place and Newcastle) which hunt three days a week, two above ground and one below. They are hunted by Mr Potts, and the whipper-in is called Pans. They show great sport, especially over the mahogany; for as Lord G—— used to say of the Parliamentary Debates, "they meet in the morning, but the dinner is the *real* business of the day." The uniform is dark green, with black velvet collar, and whether they hunt in gigs or on horseback, they must appear in white cords and topboots. The subscription is one pound per annum, and there are two dinners during the season at which the sportsmen are obliged to come dressed. At the rest it is "h'optional."

But to the Lambton Hunt again. As in the Sedgefield, so in the home country, the foxes

are badly distributed, and after two blank days running—that is to say, without any running—we had on the third no fewer than five or six foxes on foot all at once in one cover (Saggerston). In what is called the Lanchester country, the system of destroying foxes seem to be pretty general, and it is no uncommon thing to see a chaw-bacon come to see hounds "fling off" wearing a fox-skin cap, most likely the spoil of some neighbouring cover.

"Have you any foxes about here, my lad?" said I the other day to a youth driving some cows up the hill towards Ash, where the hounds were going to meet.

"Oh, oai, the Browney[1] swarms wi' em," replied he.

"And do you never get a shot at them?"

"No; I's not getten ne gun."

"But if ye had, I suppose you would," said I.

"Aye, that I wad; they comes and kills all wor hens."

He then proceeded to tell me how one farmer, Towns, hard by, slaughtered them; and certainly if the Hunt do not pay damage, they can expect nothing else. In former days the Lanchester country might, perhaps, be disregarded without exciting much surprise, being for the greater part cold, bleak moorland, with stone walls. But when we find a large and flourishing town (Hetton) on the site of a once celebrated fox cover, it naturally directs one's thoughts towards a remedy for the evil; and looking at the position of Lanchester, few countries possess greater capabilities for spring and autumn hunting. Nor am I inclined to think otherwise than favourably of the farmers of those parts. It is not

[1] A small brook.

to be expected that they will cherish a mischievous foe without some recompense; in other words, they must be paid for damage, and the country must be regularly hunted. An English farmer will stand almost anything for the sake of a Hunt. God forbid that we should ever see Mr Ralph Lambton without a pack of fox-hounds, for by resigning them he would resign his only chance of a centurionship; but with the trifling subscription he draws—scarcely enough to shoe his horses—he cannot *make* a country as well as hunt it for the amusement of his friends; therefore the members of the Hunt ought to put their shoulders to the wheel, and try what they can do, for by Jove if it becomes vacant, they may look far before they find a successor of any sort.

At Woolsingham, away to the west, the natives are still in a very primitive state, and the Churchwardens pay "head money"—viz., 2s. 6d. for every fox's head. The country is not hunted.

Fox-destroying, however, I am sorry to say, is not confined to those to whom a few chickens are a matter of importance. Those whose station in life should be a guarantee against such selfishness are found among the vulpecides, of whom I am now preparing an accurate list in both countries. I am sorry to say that we found a three-legged fox in Gibside yesterday (16th). Mr Bowes, the proprietor of Gibside and other large estates in the county of Durham, is just coming of age, and intends standing for the county, therefore a word in time may not be amiss. If he wishes to succeed, he must conciliate the country gentlemen, and avoid suspicion of vulpecide. A question we ask every candidate on the hustings is, whether he "will support the good old cause"? And many a man owes his

election to a fox's brush. Ask Lord Chandos if such is not the case! After that, if Mr Bowes has a mind to put his hand in his pocket and produce a few hundreds per annum by way of subscription, he may write himself M.P. for the County Durham.

The Lanchester Harriers are given up, and the hounds are somewhere in the neighbourhood of Brancepeth Castle. The men used to turn out in scarlet coats, with black collars, like the Raby Hunt, lacking only the gold embroidered fox.

The Peer of Raby has not appeared often with his hounds this season, having joined the Reform Hunt in the south. I hear he sometimes went "a-coping," as we used to say of a day with Sir John Cope's, and likewise had a few days with the Surrey Union, both of which, of course, he would admit to be *the* finest packs in England. His own, I hear, are much improved. His Lordship sent down orders every week from Town not only where they were to hunt but likewise what covers were to be drawn on each day.

One word on the Lambton hounds. Barring Barmaid and Boxer, they certainly are a splendid pack. The latter is not a bad old hound; and though "last comes hindmost if there be a hundred," Barmaid is not *always* there. On the other hand, let a judge of hounds look at Mountebank and Rosebud, and say whether they are not as near perfection as possible.

Our friend Lough, who kept the Turf Hotel, which sporting men used to frequent, has taken the Queen's Head; and from the manner in which he conducted the other will no doubt make it answer. In other respects we are going on much as usual. The pitmen "rise to disorder" every now and then, and the military are called out to subdue them; and we have a Political

Union and a young carver who thinks to gild his humble name by ultra-Radicalism, but he is only laughed at, and makes no converts. The drought will not admit of Mr Lambton's hunting beyond next week, I fear, though should rain come he may manage to steal on till May. The Hamsterley meeting commences on Easter Sunday, and is generally considered as the "Who-whoop" of the season. The Squire is in great force, though he sometimes sports his "wide coat"—otherwise the topcoat Pierce Egan would call an "Upper Benjamin"—and rolls, like Cæsar, in his chariot to cover.

Now I have given you all the news from these parts.

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